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[DONNA XIMENA EAVESDROPPING IN THE BALCONY.]

THE WARNING VOICE.

By the Author of "Mrs. Larkall's Boarding School," "Man and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRANGE GUEST.

I knew her falsehood. Nay, I did not know,
I felt that she was false. God warns us so.

anon.

FASHION had set its seal upon a charming little mansion in the immediate neighbourhood of Mayfair, which that portion of "The London Directory" devoted to the aristocracy, described as the residence of Ormond Redgrave, Esq.

It was a mansion, as distinct from a mere house. That is to say, though it was not particularly large, everything about it was on a large scale. There was the air of a mansion about it all, from the extinguisher for links on either side the door-steps up to the heraldic hatchment to the memory of Lord Redgrave de Redgrave between the drawing-room windows.

Outside—apart from the hatchment, which, glowing with gold and colours, had a lively rather than a funereal aspect—the house was gloomy. Inside it was the perfection of lightness, elegance, and comfort. Fashion had dictated all its arrangements, and had left little or nothing to be desired in them. The De Redgrave dining-room on the hall-floor (occupying the position of the parlour in ordinary houses, but fashion knows not parlours) was a model of comfort. Subdued in tone, with ponderous oaken furniture, and nothing about it to detract from the splendour of the dinner-table in all the glory of plate and flowers and crystal, it was always pronounced to be in the best possible taste. And then it offered such a striking contrast to the drawing-rooms, large, light, and scattered with furniture in that carefully-careless style which is the perfection of furnishing.

It has only to be mentioned that the mansion was provided with a billiard-room, two conservatories, an unexceptionable boudoir (in apple-green silk), and a smoking-room fitted in the Oriental style, with a

fountain perpetually playing from an alabaster basin in the centre, for it to be seen that fashion had dictated the arrangements, and not without a special and particular view to comfort.

The house had been brought to perfection by the late Lord Redgrave de Redgrave, whose hatchment now enlivened the front of it; and having passed into his nephew's possession, had been adopted by him in preference to his father's mansion in Park Lane.

His occupation of it was shared by Lady Redgrave; but she was a great invalid, and had a suite of rooms solely for her own use, so that she was never seen by visitors. They were entertained by yet another occupant of the mansion whose name has already been mentioned—namely, Ormond's sister, the charming Dona.

Surpassingly beautiful and irresistibly fascinating was Dona Redgrave.

Unlike her brother, she was purely Saxon in style. She had the golden hair which has ever been esteemed the glory of that race, and the blue eyes for which there is no comparison but the unclouded heaven which it seems to reflect. Her features were small and delicate, approaching the Greek models in purity of outline, and a great charm of the face consisted in the sensitive rosy flush which would suffuse the skin, pure as alabaster, at the slightest expression of emotion.

Every one who saw Dona Redgrave only for an instant remembered her face as one of singular beauty; and carried off an irresistible impression that she was of a free, frank, generous, and extremely sensitive nature. In this they described her to a nicety: she was as good, and true, and loveable as she was fair to look upon.

On the morning after Andrew Nolan's first examination at Ingarstone, the fair Dona sat in the drawing-room, shaded by the lace curtains of one of the windows, reading a morning paper. She was attired in an amply flowing wrapper of white spotted muslin, and her hair was loosely dressed, so that part of it escaped from a ribbon by which the rest was confined, and floated over her shoulders.

The newspaper contained an account of the pro-

ceedings at Ingarstone; and Dona naturally read them with the utmost eagerness and attention.

She was thus engaged when the door opened, and amidst a silken rustle there entered a tall, stately woman, Spanish in the style of her dress and of her beauty, with blue-black hair, and large eyes of intense blackness, fringed with lashes that cast a broad shadow upon the cheek.

Dona looked up, and insensibly shuddered as she did so.

The dark intruder half bowed, and then in a voice of singular richness, but with a slight foreign accent, she said:

"Do you ride this morning?"

"Thank you, no," replied Dona, "I am deeply interested in the paper. It has a full account of the affair at Ingarstone."

"The murder?"

"Yes."

"I have already read it," returned the dark beauty.

"Indeed!"

"Oh, I am an early riser, you know," the woman returned, with an air of assumed indifference. "Well, and what do you think of the affair? The man Nolan is clearly guilty. They will hang him, of course?"

She had gone to a window behind Dona, and pretended to be looking out into the street; but in reality she was giving a sidelong glance of the utmost intensity at the unconscious girl.

"I cannot agree with you," was the reply; "in spite of my brother's evidence, and the suspicion it casts upon the prisoner's character, I am inclined to believe that the story he tells is perfectly true, and that the diamonds were given to him by young Holt for the service he says he rendered him."

The woman's eyes flashed.

"Is she defending a lover?" she seemed to ask.

But, aloud, she merely asked, carelessly:

"Then you think young Holt the murderer?"

"Not necessarily."

"No?"

"Clearly, no: there may have been a third person, from whom Holt may have received the plunder."

There shot from under the fringed eyelashes of the woman, who looked from the window, an expression such as that which fires the eye of the viper before its spring.

"My dear girl," she said, with subdued contempt, "it is, no doubt, possible that there might have been a third, or a fourth, or even a hundredth; but is it probable? What would a poor, miserable fellow like Holt have to offer in exchange for diamonds? At present I don't believe the story Nolan has vamped up, and which is entirely unsupported; but if I did I should certainly hold the younger man guilty. Depend upon it, the crime lies between them."

Dora Ingarstone was more than surprised at the warmth and decision with which these words were uttered.

One might have imagined that the woman who spoke them had some special interest in the matter.

But how was that possible?

The tall, dark beauty, of noble bearing, who had entered Redgrave's drawing-room was a guest in his house, and was there under peculiar circumstances, and such as precluded the idea of her knowing anything of Ingarstone, or its history past or present.

A few words will explain her position.

Recently—that is to say, almost immediately on his return from America—Ormond Redgrave, accompanied by his sister and one or two other friends, had taken a three months' trip in his yacht, and had ventured into the Mediterranean. On their return they had put in at Cadix, merely from a freak and a desire expressed by some of the ladies to see the interior. They stayed there three days. On leaving, they found a steamer on the point of starting for England, and they also found a lady and her maid, with a moderate quantity of luggage, anxious to depart on board it, but driven to desperation on learning that there was not a berth to spare.

Ormond Redgrave had all the innate politeness of an English gentleman.

He inquired the name and rank of the lady, and found that she was called Donna Ximena de Cordova. On this he requested an interview, and finding that the magnificent being who answered to that magnificent name, spoke English with ease and fluency, and really appeared to be fit the utmost distress at not being able to get to this country, he kindly offered her a berth on board his yacht.

She accepted, with tears of gratitude.

She invoked scores of saints with scores of unpronounceable names to shower blessings on the head of her benefactor, and did not lose a minute in going on board.

During the voyage, the lady used all her exertions to ingratiate herself in the good graces of the young and handsome Englishman, not forgetting his amiable sister. Both pronounced the charming donna a delightful companion.

On reaching England the misfortunes which had marked the outset of the fair Ximena's voyage re-assumed themselves. On applying at her banker's for certain letters of introduction and credit, she found that they had not arrived—and it was almost too ridiculous to think of, but nevertheless a melancholy fact—the heiress of the Cordovas was penniless.

She had, however, as she remarked, one resource. There were her jewels—doubtless she could raise money upon them. Her fingers played with a diamond cross that rested on her white bosom as she spoke, and tears, brighter than the diamonds, fell and glistened upon them.

Ormond Redgrave was but mortal.

A beautiful woman in tears was irresistible. He declared that she should not part with her jewels; but should transfer her luggage from the yacht, with his own, and take up her residence in Mayfair, as his guest, until advice from Cadix should have reached her.

That was three weeks ago.

Donna Ximena still remained an ornament to the Redgrave drawing-room, and for some time very little had been said about the letters of credit from Cadix.

The donna seemed perfectly comfortable, and apparently thought less and less of leaving. To make the matter worse, there had slowly developed in her manner a certain imperiousness and self-assertion, that had not been without its influence, particularly on the gentle Dora.

The guest was rapidly becoming the mistress. Dora felt this, though she hardly dared own it to herself. Her woman's instinct told her that Ormond had made a mistake in bringing this stranger into the house; everything confirmed that impression, and perhaps nothing more strongly than the words which had just escaped the donna's lips.

Dora was about to reply to them when the servant entered.

He presented a card upon a gold salver. It was a small unglazed card, scarcely thicker than paper, and on it were the words, "Honourable Cecil Ingarstone."

"Admit his lordship," said Dora—knowing that Lord Ingarstone's eldest son was only addressed by the title of "lord" by courtesy, but still using it.

The donna's large eyes read the card as it lay on the salver, yards away from her. As she did so, a slight tremor seemed to pass over her frame. She rose.

"You have visitors," she said, "I will leave you." Before the other could reply the young lord was shown in.

Thus it happened that he encountered the Spanish woman face to face. The donna bowed. He did not return it. Rather, he stood like one stricken with amazement, his eyes fixed, his mouth half open. Clearly they had met before. As clearly this present meeting was a prodigious surprise. In a second, the young lord would have spoken, but the donna raised the forefinger of her right hand—her left hand was grasping her ample robes—motioned to him impressively, and went out.

Before he had time to recover himself, Lord Cecil became conscious that he had entered the drawing-room and was standing before a lady who had half-risen to receive him.

"Your lordship comes from my brother?" asked the soft voice of Dora Redgrave.

"A—yes—I beg pardon—I was coming to town and Ormond made me promise to come and drop a card. He felt that you might be anxious to know more of the strange proceedings at Ingarstone than the papers tell you."

"Thank you," replied Dora. "I am indeed anxious, most anxious about the matter. Ormond, you know, is so hasty and impetuous—so ready to act on his heart rather than his head—that I have been from the first afraid lest he should have compromised some of our people and get himself into trouble."

"There is little fear of either, I think, Miss Redgrave," replied his lordship. "Nolan's position is a very suspicious one. He is either guilty himself of this terrible crime, or he has been mixed up with them who are. In either case he has brought this trouble upon himself."

"That is Donna Ximena's opinion," said Dora.

"I beg pardon," cried his lordship, "you mentioned—"

"The donna. Ah, I forget. You have not met."

"You allude to the lady who left the room as I entered?"

"Yes."

"And she is—"

"The Donna Ximena de Cordova."

The face of the listener underwent a sudden, almost spasmodic change.

"May I ask if she has been long in England?" he faltered.

"Three weeks," said the lady, upon whom the agitation of her guest was not lost, though she was too well bred to notice it. "She came over in my brother's yacht from Cadix."

"What! This woman? His—"

He checked himself.

"You will excuse me," he said. "Your brother mentioned the adventure; but I was not prepared to meet the lady. And so she remains under this roof as your brother's guest?"

"She does."

"As your companion?"

"Occasionally."

"And it is her opinion that Nolan was guilty of my poor sister's death?"

"Or that, as you have said, he has a guilty knowledge of those who were."

Moved by some sudden impulse, the young lord drew his chair nearer to that occupied by the fair girl, whom he was addressing for the first time in his life.

As he did so his eye glanced in the direction of the window from which the donna had looked as she conversed with Dora. It had a balcony full of plants, and which communicated with other rooms, running along the front of the house. The window was open, and through the opening Cecil could faintly distinguish the rustling shadow of a woman's skirts.

He had no doubt but that the donna was there, and that she was listening.

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERVIEW, AND WHAT FOLLOWED IT.

Have you done, woman?
This mummery is to work me from my purpose,
My settled will.

Barry Cornwall.

UNABLE to communicate his suspicions, Cecil Ingarstone contented himself by withholding the communication he had intended to make to Dora.

The dark beauty exercised a singular influence over him.

Whatever had been the circumstances under which they had met, it was clear that he retained a very

strong impression of her power, and of the uncalculating manner in which she would exercise it.

He resolved to use the utmost discretion. But when a handsome young fellow sits down to talk to a pretty girl, of his own age and his own position in life, it is much easier to form such a resolution than to act upon it.

At first he carefully limited the conversation to the subject of the events transpiring at Ingarstone, taking care that not a word capable of misconception should escape his lips. But as he sat there, the impression that he was addressing a lovely creature, whose hair like sunshine stealing in turned to pure gold, and whose eyes alternately sparkled with intelligence and softened to irresistible tenderness, overcame even the other impression—namely, that of his being watched.

He forgot the presence of the donna in the balcony.

It was with a start and a crimson flushing of the face that he presently recalled it, with a conviction that however careful he might have been as to his words, the modulation of his voice must have betrayed what?

He hardly gave it a name.

It was nothing more than a consciousness of pleasing and being pleased, which he felt might not be agreeable to those listening ears.

So as soon as possible he rose to take his leave.

"Thank you for this visit," said Dora, cordially. "Should you receive further intelligence from Ingarstone, and it would not be troubling you too much—"

"I will do myself the pleasure of making a second call," interrupted the young lord, eagerly. "But my not welcoming you among us? My sister Estrella would, I am sure, be delighted if you would spare us only a few days."

"Ah, you have a sister? Thank you, it would afford me much pleasure to make her acquaintance; but, until my brother's return, it would be impossible for me to leave town. You see, we have a guest."

She hesitated. Cecil could feel the eyes of the woman she spoke of looking him through.

"You allude to the donna?" he stammered.

"Yes; and since her name has been again mentioned, will it be impudent if I say that, from your manner just now, I gathered that she was not quite a stranger to you?"

"I—I think we have met," said his lordship, nervously.

"I was right, then. You have," cried Dora, and you can tell me something more than I know respecting her. Nay, have no fears. You may confide in me implicitly. Whatever you say will be sacred: it will reach no ears but mine."

"I am sure of that," interposed Cecil; "but—"

"Ah, if you knew what motives prompt me to make these inquiries, you would excuse all that may be apparently strange in my conduct—you would sympathize with me and aid me. It is not for myself that I speak—it is for my brother. You know his foible. No one can have been in his society even a few hours without seeing that pride of birth, a reverence for noble ancestry and pure blood; is the ruling idea of his mind. Justly proud of his own lineage, he is ready to lavish favours on all who enjoy a like privilege, and to treat with scorn and contempt the mere nobodies whose families date from yesterday. It was this feeling which induced him to interest himself in the misfortunes of this Spanish woman. She was alone and in distress upon the quay at Cadix. She represented to him that it was of the last importance, that she should reach England without delay. My brother's yacht was on the point of sailing, and he was half-disposed to offer her a passage in it: he did not seriously entertain the idea till she mentioned her name, and added that she was descended in a direct line from those Moorish chiefs who, in the eighth century, made Cordova the capital of an independent Spanish kingdom. My brother's heart was instantly won."

"And he brought the lady to England?"

As he asked the question, the young lord gazed nervously, anxiously toward the window.

The black eyes were there—large, blazing, and threatening in their expression.

"He did," replied Dora, in answer to the question; "but even before we reached England I had my suspicions of the woman. They have increased since she has been in this house. I believe that my brother has been deceived. I believe that she is not a Spaniard. I fear that she is an impostor—"

"Surely not," interposed Cecil, trembling as he did so.

"You think not?" asked Dora, earnestly.

What could he answer? What, with the angry eyes looking into his face?

"I—I should hope, I should trust not," he ventured to say.

"Ah! I am so happy to hear you say this," cried Dora; "I feared that what you know would only

confirm my suspicions. I thought, from your manner, that you knew more than you cared to say. And you really think she is all she represents herself to be? You think there is nothing strange, nothing suspicious in her remaining here week after week, apparently with no intention of quitting us?"

She paused, as if expecting he would say something; but as he hesitated, she held out her hand, and as he took it, said, while a pleasant smile played on her sensitive face:

"You have made me so happy! And you will excuse my troubling you with this purely family matter?"

"Excuse you!" cried Cecil, with animation. "Thank you! thank you!" exclaimed Dora. "Pray give my respects to your sister Beatrice, and tell her I long for the day when we may meet, and, I trust, become firm friends. Good day, and thank you."

She accompanied him to the door of the drawing-room, exceeding, in that respect, what was required by etiquette, but impelled by a strong feeling to express her sense of the confidence which had set her mind so much at ease.

As for Cecil Ingarstone, it would be impossible to describe the feelings with which he quitted the drawing-room.

Moral courage is a much higher quality than the mere physical courage which often wins so much admiration. It is a higher and it is also a rarer quality. Now, this young lord was as brave as a lion; he had no idea of fear, in its ordinary sense; yet he quitted Dora Redgrave with the sense of having played the coward, and that it might be at the expense of her happiness and that of the brother to whom she was so deeply attached.

"Am I a coward, a poltroon?" he mused, as he descended the marble staircase, and passed out between bowing footmen, whose obsequiousness he scarcely acknowledged. "My proper course would have been to have expected that listening woman—to have declared all I knew of her—to have denounced her as an impostor, and so have saved Ormond and his charming sister from the consequences of her acts. Instead of that, what have I done? I have thrown them off their guard, and left them confiding and defenceless. By heaven, I despise myself; and yet, could I mistake the vicious meaning of that eye? Could I doubt what that warning finger meant?"

Indignant and annoyed, he wandered on, and, almost without noticing the course he was pursuing, found himself at length in Hyde Park. For some time he walked in the shadow of the trees, until at length he approached a seat occupied by a solitary female.

As he reached it, she suddenly rose. Her face had been hidden by a veil, but by an abrupt movement she raised it, threw it back, and looked the young lord full in the face.

It was Donna Ximena.

"You here?" she cried involuntarily.

"Yes, Cecil Ingarstone," was the reply, "here. It is well that you and I should meet, and should understand each other. But for my accidental presence an hour ago, you would have done me a great wrong, and forced on me the necessity of a speedy vengeance."

"What could I do, Mildred?" he asked impulsively.

The woman did not seem to think it strange that he called her by a different name to that the Redgraves knew her by.

"What could you do?" she responded fiercely. "Yes. Your presence in that house overwhelmed me with surprise."

"Surely?"

"I knew that you must be there in a false character."

"Indeed! Your sagacity is marvellous," the woman answered, with a bitter sneer.

"I was certain also," the young man went on, not deigning to notice the interruption, "that you had assumed that character for some desperate purpose—some purpose which boded the Redgraves no good."

"And since when has the heir of Ingarstone taken so strong an interest in the welfare of this haughty family?" asked the donna, accompanying her words with a scathing glance of unutterable scorn.

"I do not understand you," was his lordship's reply.

"No? Yet it is not the first time we have met. It is not the first time I have warned you that a word of mine would loose a tiger at your throat."

"But, like all the rest of your race, you have surrounded what you know, or affect to know, with so much of mystery and obscurity, that I half-believe you have only fooled me all the while."

That was Lord Cecil's answer.

"And it is because you have half-believed this that you have obeyed me implicitly in all I have required

of you? It is because you think me powerless that you tremble even now as I speak, lest you may make me your enemy beyond the power of conciliation? No, no, Cecil Ingarstone; you know that I and those about me are dangerous to your house. And it is because you know this that you obey me."

"That I have obeyed you?" he answered proudly.

"And will do so," was the woman's reply.

"When I see you in your true character—"

"Pshaw! All characters are true to me."

"When I see you throw off this miserable disguise," he persisted, "and have your assurance that you contemplate no injury to these people, who have sheltered you under their hospitable roof, like—"

He hesitated.

"Go on!" sneered the woman. "Like the fool in the fable, you would say, who warmed the snake in his bosom, and was stung for his pains. That is your meaning. Confess it."

"I will—I do! Redgrave has behaved nobly, and how are you requiting him?"

"As he deserves."

"What?"

"I repeat—as he deserves. Why has he acted as he has done? Why did he bring me to England? Why does he extend to me the splendid hospitality of his mansion? Is it because I am a woman? Is it because I am penniless? No, no! It is because he believes in my blue-blood and ancient lineage, and because it flatters his pride to do the right thing by one of his order—one of 'us.' What claim has such a man on my gratitude? None. Such men are born to be used. I have determined that Redgrave shall serve my ends, and again I warn you how you cross my path."

Cecil listened with indignantly flashing eyes.

"Not to expose you is to become your accomplice," he said.

"Well?"

"To that degradation I will never descend."

"You speak rashly—impetuously."

"No; I speak as a man, and I will act as one."

"You will?"

"Yes. I will open Redgrave's eyes to your real character. I will tell him you have no claims to the rank you have assumed—"

"Hush! We may be overheard."

"And what then, since 'his exposure is inevitable' I have been your dupe too long. I owe it to myself to set myself free; I owe it to Redgrave to expose the imposture of which he is the victim. He is a noble, generous fellow!"

"His sister also," responded the woman, "has a fair face and a winning smile. You needn't blush. You have no cause, as you had when you used to degrade yourself by talking boyish folly to me—patronizing me—doing all you could in your lordly way to secure my ruin for your pastime. Dora Redgrave is of your own class, and it would be no disgrace to you even to make her Lady Ingarstone. Do it, if you will," the woman added, her eyes glowing, her voice deepening, and her bosom heaving, "I care not. I shall not interpose. But," and she laid her finger on his arm with a suddenness that made him start, "have a care! Don't stand between the tigress and her prey. Don't seek to break her leap. That will bring you peril only, not profit. That will defeat your ends without baffling mine. Remember, while I choose I am Donna Ximena de Cordova—a title to which I have a claim—and I am Ormond Redgrave's honoured and respected guest. You will disturb that arrangement at your peril!"

She dropped her hand and turned to go.

"Stay!" cried the young lord, crimson with indignation.

With an impatient movement of her hand she waved him back, and moved from the spot on which he stood.

Following a natural impulse, he strode forward.

A few steps brought him to her side.

"Mildred!" he said, and was about to lay a hand upon her shoulder.

With an abrupt, proud movement, she turned and confronted him, then, raised her right hand and pointed to the carriage-drive, of which the few steps had brought them in full view.

She did not utter a word.

But Cecil Ingarstone, following the direction of her hand, saw that a carriage was passing slowly along before them. The back seat only was occupied. A lady sat there, her face hidden beneath the fringes of a dainty mauve-tinted parasol.

Dropping the parasol, the lady looked up.

Dora Redgrave must have altered her mind about the ride which her guest had proposed. She was taking it alone. And now, as she glanced in that direction, the young lord knew that she recognized him and his companion.

He knew it by a slight, almost imperceptible start, and the consciousness of his position made him tremble like a detected criminal.

CHAPTER XI

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD.

Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill;
And yet I feared him all the more
For lying there so still;
There was a manhood in his look
That murder could not kill.

Thomas Hood

The night is never dark in cities. Even when the gloom of a starless midnight enfolds it, London is not dark: it enjoys the advantage of a perpetual illumination, the lurid glare of which is visible for miles.

It is only away in the heart of the country that it is possible to realize "darkness which may be felt," or the intensity of gloom conveyed in the homely simile "so dark that you cannot see your hand."

There night descends like a pall. Objects close and remote are alike blotted out. The nearest tree is as invisible as the distant hill. The white road is not to be distinguished from the black hedge by which it is skirted. The rustling of the wind among the leaves alone informs the wayfarer that he is by the wood. The rushing of water alone warns him against the peril of the river. Beyond this he has no guide but his own sagacity, and that often proves but a poor safeguard against the dangers of the dark night.

Such a night as this had closed in, as a man, bearing a lantern, trudged steadily forward on the road which united the town of Rochester with the village of Ingarstone.

The swinging lantern made a luminous spot in the gloom. It shot its rays in a strange, fantastic fashion on surrounding objects, illuminating them for an instant and then suffering them to fade into instant obscurity. But, as the top of the lantern was dark, the face of the man who carried it was always in gloom; the light only fell upon his legs, and upon a parcel wrapped in a sheet of white paper, which he carried under his left arm.

Plodding on in his quiet fashion, the man had arrived at length within about a mile of Ingarstone, when he stopped at a road-side stile, and clambering over it, traced out, by the aid of the lantern, a sheep-track which led over a wild, stubbly common, and so by a short cut down into the village.

The common was dotted here and there with clumps of gorse, and at intervals a solitary tree, lean and ragged, skirted the way. Each of these obstacles, as it presented itself, was closely scanned by the man who carried the lantern, and who appeared both to know the neighbourhood and to be suspicious of it.

The middle of the common had been reached without anything occurring to justify alarm, and the wayfarer was quickening his pace at the near prospect of home, when, as he suddenly raised the lantern to reconnoitre a stunted elm, he involuntarily stopped with an expression of surprise.

Under the elm there stood a man with folded arms, leaning his brawny shoulders against the rough trunk of the tree.

Evidently he had watched the approaching light as it flickered across the common, and was calmly awaiting it.

"Stop a moment!" he said, raising himself from against the tree by jerking his left shoulder forward.

The other raised the lantern on a level with his head.

Thus the light of it streamed down on both faces at once, and as it did so both men recoiled.

"Tim!" cried one, with an irrepressible shudder.

"Yes, Mr. Curly," said the other, looking fiercely into a face strangely like his own, but that it was fresh and ruddy, while his was wasted, tanned and freckled.

"It's me, Tim."

"It was true, then?" gasped Curly Holt, looking about in terror, lest they should be watched.

"What was true?" cried Tim.

"That you had come back."

"Who said so?"

"That you had been lurking about here for nights?"

"For days and nights. A week of 'em. But who says this?"

"That you were at the cottage—"

"Yesterday morning. But who knows this? Who told you?"

"Not me. No one told me. It came out in court to-day."

"In court?"

"Yes. You know what's happened?"

"About the murder? Yes, yes; I know. But what's this about me? They don't suspect that I'd a hand in it?"

"They do."

"What?"

The wretched man shrieked out the word, and his face writhed with a spasmodic contortion.

"Stay!" he cried, as if a sudden light had burst upon him. "I know who's at the bottom of this: it's mother's doings."

"Never!" said Curly.
 "Tis, I tell you," returned the other, with renewed fierceness. "She's all along suspected it; she's twitted me with it, and mandered about it, and now she's let it out and done for me. I knew she'd never rest till I was hung."

"It's wrong, Tim; it's wrong, I tell you," exclaimed the other.

"Right or wrong, what do I care?" cried the outcast. "The bloodhounds are on my track again—that's what I've to look to. Curly, you must help me in this pass."

"Help you?"

"Yea. I can't fly: I can't leave this part."

"You mean that you will give yourself up?"

"What? Give myself up? Thrust my neck into the noose? Not I. If I stay here, it's because it's my only chance. Here I've at least a place to lay my head in: if I went elsewhere I should have none."

"But they must find you if you stay hereabouts, Tim."

"Not with your help."

"But—"

"I tell you, I have shelter. I can hide where they'll never look for me. All I want is food. You must bring it me."

As he listened to these words all the colour died out of Curly Holt's cheek, and left it ashy pale.

"No, Tim, no," he gasped, with a great effort.

The other seized his arm in a fierce grip.

"You refuse?" he said; "you, my brother, refuse to save my life?"

"I refuse," cried the youth, his lips quivering as he spoke, "to become your accomplice."

"Miserable wretch!" shrieked Tim Holt, "what would you have me do?"

"If you are innocent, give yourself up to the proof of it," was the answer; "if guilty, God help you, Tim—I can't."

"As there's a heaven above us, you shall!" shrieked Tim, "cursing hypocrite as you are, in all the pride of your sham virtues! If I can't make you believe me innocent, I will make you act a brother's part by me. You don't leave this spot till you've sworn to help me—to bring me food, and to keep my secret; you don't, and that I promise you."

He seized Curly's left arm as he spoke, and held him as in the grip of a vice.

The lad thus treated was cool, but determined.

"Unhand me, Tim," he said, calmly.

"Never, till you promise what I ask. You'll keep your word: I know you well enough to know that; and you'll give it."

"Never."

"Take care, Curly; take care. I'm no child," said the brother. "I may do you an injury before I mean it."

"And I," returned Curly, still quite calm, "may be tempted into doing my duty."

"Your duty!" sneered Tim.

"Yea; my duty. I've no right to screen or shelter you. I've no right to stand parleying with you here. My duty is to treat you as any other suspected man, and to help and not defeat the ends of justice. Release me, Tim, or I'll do it, though you are my brother."

Tim Holt replied with a loud, contemptuous laugh: "You'll take me? Arrest me? Not alive!" he cried, with sudden determination.

"Alive or dead," retorted Curly, growing angry. "I shall be balked by no threats. Hands off, and you are free. Go where you will, I promise not to follow you; beyond that I will promise nothing. I swear it."

"And may the oath choke you!" shrieked his brother.

Exasperated beyond control, he accompanied the words with a sudden lunge forward, which nearly threw his opponent. The lantern dropped and lay blazing on the ground. Beside it fell the parcel which Curly Holt had been conveying home; but the lad saved himself from falling, and in an instant the brothers had closed.

They were good wrestlers.

Both were young, strong, and vigorous, though Curly had the advantage in these respects. But what the other lacked in physical condition he made up in determination. Once roused, he was furious as a wild beast; and being deterred by none of the qualms which made Curly hesitate to do his brother an injury, he speedily gained the advantage.

The contest was short and sharp.

After a brief struggle, Tim Holt tripped up his opponent, who fell before a driving blow which he at the same instant aimed at his mouth.

As he fell, so he lay—motionless.

Only a faint groan showed that he lived.

"Have I killed him?" gasped the outcast, terrified at his own act.

Snatching up the lantern, he tore open the door of it, and dropping on one knee, held the light so that it

might fall upon his brother's face. It was covered with blood. The eyes had a startling, unnatural expression, and were insensible to the effects of the light as the lantern was flashed before them. It was impossible to say whether the youth was simply stunned, or had been killed by the combined force of the blow and the fall.

Full of consternation, Tim set down the lantern and put one hand under the flaxen locks as they spread out on the ground. It came out red with blood, as from a scalp wound.

Then he felt for the pulse at the left wrist, but found none.

"He cannot be dead!" he gasped, rising to his feet.

The words were uttered as Cain might have uttered them when he saw the innocent Abel stretched on the blood-bedabbled grass before him, and like the feelings of the first fratricide were those of this unhappy man.

But he had little time for reflection. It was necessary to think of safety. What Curly had told him was sufficiently startling, but added to what had just happened, it filled him with the utmost alarm.

"If they should catch me here, and with this," he exclaimed, while a cold perspiration broke out in every limb, "nothing will save me. Yet I can't leave him to perish here. He is my brother."

He clasped his hands to his brow, in an agony of uncertainty.

Then his resolution was formed.

"I will fetch some water from the hut," he said, "and see what that will do in the way of reviving him. The old man will be asleep."

Catching up the lantern, he started off with it, in a cross-country direction, shading the light with his coat as well as he could consistently with having the use of it, and continued to hurry on, until he had reached a clump of trees, or rather shrubs, overshadowing and partly hiding a path which led down to an abandoned sand-pit.

Through these trees the lad forced his way, and so reached a path which wound in a tortuous fashion downward into the cavernous gloom of the pit, which the lantern, though held aloft, was incapable of illuminating.

In a remote corner of this gloomy place was a hut, loosely formed of a few rotting planks, apparently with a view to sheltering the tools and barrows of the workmen by whom the sand-pit was originally excavated.

As he approached this hut, Tim Holt moved slowly and upon tip-toe. He also swung the lantern behind him.

His movements, however, were not so dexterous as he intended. His presence in the cavern betrayed itself to some one lying in the hut.

"Is that you, Childers?" asked a faint voice.

"All right, guv'ner," responded Holt, answering to the name without hesitation.

"You've got a light," whined the voice that had already spoken.

"It's only a candle-end I've picked up. The night's like pitch."

"Out with it, lad. Best out with it. There's prying eyes about."

"Right you are," responded the lad.

Then he took off his coat and threw it over the lantern. Having done this, he seized a stone jar, the position of which he had noticed, and retraced his steps up out of the cavern, with as much caution and circumspection as he had used in coming down. Once out on the common again, he uncovered the light, and was thus enabled to seek out the spot on which he had left the body of his brother.

It lay there on the stunted grass, still and stark, as when left; but there was a broader pool of blood round the bright curls, the tips of which it had dyed red.

Once more Tim Holt knelt down by his brother's side, and peered into his face, and felt his wrist for the pulse that was not beating then. Once more there came over him the qualm of heart sickness which had followed the first horrible dread that he had become a fratricide.

But no words now escaped his lips.

There was no time for raving or for regret. To restore life or to conceal the body of the dead, these now became imperative tasks; and on these he concentrated all his energies.

In the struggle a portion of Curly's shirt front had been torn out, and hung loose. This the brother tore and dipped in water from the stone jug, and spread over the white, ice-cold brow, that yielded no impression under his fingers. With a portion of the water he also moistened the lips and hands of the rigid youth. Every expedient that he had ever heard of for restoring vitality he put into practice, but with no apparent result.

At length, overcome by disappointment and remorse, he sat down beside the body, and contemplated it by the dim glow of the lantern, but with stony eyes and a rigid face.

He did not shed tears.

The feeling in his heart was not one of pity, but of horror, partly growing out of the thought of what he had done, and partly from that of the consequences it might entail on him.

Presently he heaved a deep sigh, and clasping his hands, muttered:

"There was a fatality in our meeting. I did not seek him. What right had he to cross my path at that moment when I never gave a thought to him? He has brought it upon himself."

His eyes wandered toward the feet of the prostrate man while he spoke, and then encountered the roll of white paper which Curly Holt was engaged in bringing home.

"What is this?" he asked himself, mechanically picking it up; "will this give any clue to our meeting?"

He broke the thin string tied about the paper, and opened it. The roll consisted of a number of printed sheets, which the unfortunate lad had fetched from the printer's at Rochester, the nearest town, by Lord Ingarstone's directions.

Raising the lantern with his right-hand, and holding up one of these sheets in his left, the outcast read these words:

"One Hundred Pounds Reward!—The public are hereby informed that the above reward will be given to any person or persons who will give, or cause to be given, such information as may lead to the apprehension of *Timothy Holt*, otherwise *Childers*, an escaped convict, against whom a warrant has been issued by the justices of Ingarstone, on a charge of murder, committed in that parish, in the year 18—. The reward will be given to any person not actually an accomplice to the crime.—Signed: INGARSTONE."

"And he might have given me up for that reward," cried the young man, as he dropped the paper and gazed upon his brother's face.

"He might," said the voice which had spoken in the hut of the sand-pit.

Tim Holt started, and glanced over his shoulders at the grinning face that met his there.

He had been unconscious that while he read the placard other eyes had followed his through it, line after line.

(To be continued.)

We have before been told by Mr. Sala how Mr. Lincoln shakes hands, and the correspondent of the *New York World*, in his account of Mr. Lincoln's visit to Philadelphia, verifies the account:—"Mr. Lincoln passed some time in shaking hands. This salutation is with him a peculiarity. It is not the pump-handle 'shake,' nor a twist, nor a spasmodic motion from side to side, nor yet a reach towards the knee and a squeeze at arm's-length. When Mr. Lincoln performs this rite, it becomes a solemnity. A ghastly smile overspreads his peculiar countenance; then, after an instant's pause, he suddenly thrusts his 'flapper' at you as a sword is thrust in tierce; you feel your hand enveloped as in a fleshy vice, a cold clamminess overspreads your unfortunate digits, a cork-screw burrows its way from your finger-nails to your shoulder, the smile disappears, and you know that you are unshackled. You carefully count your fingers to see that none of them are missing, or that they have not become assimilated in a common mass."

JAPANESE VIEW OF THE ENGLISH.—The following extract from the work published as to the recent visit to England of the Japanese Ambassadors will be interesting to our readers. The English are thus spoken of:—"They, the western barbarians, who have lately destroyed our town, we visited. The men are red-faced and fond of eating, and the low men eat raw meat, of which lumps are exhibited, much to our disgust. These people are very expert in iron; copies of which our artists have drawn. Their buyers and sellers (merchants) are not allowed to do any other work, and, therefore, being somewhat ignorant, principally talk of business. The nobles (Daimios) buy their wives from the merchants, who train their daughters for that purpose. We think them great barbarians! The women wear frames to keep away the men. Some are pretty, but their eyes are large and close together; their feet are large and clumsy, and they have big legs. These women sing loud and roll their eyes, keeping time with the motions of their heads. When they meet the men in the evening they are but partially dressed. These people make us sick with eating and drinking. The carriages in the streets try to knock down the people on foot, especially the women, to amuse the drivers. Their government house, where the Daimios meet to talk and sleep, is well built, and equal to a first-class tea house; the women are kept there in a cage. These people looked at us much. The women are allowed to run about without keepers, playing with umbrellas (parasols). They are the greatest barbarians in the west."



[ESTHER'S DISMISSAL.]

THE STEPMOTHER

CHAPTER XIV.

Grief lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

Shakespeare.

WHEN Esther returned home, half-an-hour later, exhausted and nearly heart-broken, she was met at the door by her employer, whose red face and lofty indignation were rather startling objects to encounter.

"Madam!" was all Esther could say, expecting, from the woman's manner, to hear that one or more of her late charges had perished horribly during her absence—and she sank tottering toward a seat in the hall.

"Don't sit on my chairs!" said the lady. "Was there ever such iniquity, such imposition, such a downright outrage on a respectable family? I have a good mind to call a policeman and send you to prison!"

The lady had been brooding over her outraged dignity ever since Russell's departure, and worked herself up to a most furious passion.

Esther was speechless with astonishment. "I see you are surprised at being found out," the woman resumed. "I dare say you've been to visit your lover!"

The vivid blush that suffused the girl's white cheeks confirmed the woman's suspicions, and she continued:

"How dare you, you shameless creature, come here and pass yourself off for an honest girl? I ought not to pay you a penny for your services since you have been here, but I will do so; and then you must go, bag and baggage!"

"She drew her purse from her pocket, and counted out some money, which she handed Esther.

The poor girl had been bewildered by the suddenness of her employer's tirade, but she now drew her slight form up with dignity, and her voice was full of laughtiness, as she said:

"What do you mean, madam? Be pleased to explain yourself."

"Ask yourself what I mean!" was the incensed reply. "My children tell me that when I send you out with them in the morning, you invariably take them to the nearest post-office, and that you are in the habit of dropping in letters there every day. I want no such correspondence going on beneath my roof. Moreover, I want nobody's mistress in my household among my children. Take your money and go."

Esther refused the money by a disdainful gesture, and, after a moment's struggle for calmness, said:

"But, Mrs. —"

"Not a word. I give you ten minutes to take yourself and your baggage out of my house. If you are here longer, I'll have your trunks set out in the street."

Bewildered and shocked as was the pure young girl by the treatment she was receiving, she saw that there could be no appeal to the woman's kindness or mercy, and with a sobbing sigh she passed out of the room, and went up-stairs to the apartment that had been hers.

It did not take many minutes to pack her trunks, it being Esther's habit to keep everything in order, and they being already half-packed. She filled her travelling-bag and took it on her arm, and then descended the stairs.

"You had better take your pay," said the woman, meeting her; "and resolve to lead an honest life—"

"Madam!" interrupted Esther, her cheeks all aflame, and her eyes flashing, "I will take the money, for I have earned it, and your unjust suspicions have not alienated my right to it. And I will thank you to have my trunks brought down-stairs, as I am anxious to shorten my stay in your presence!"

The lady replied by having the trunks brought down, and then addressed the girl in severe terms, winding up by asking where she intended going, and how she intended to remove her luggage.

In her bewilderment and anxiety the girl had forgotten to form her plans, and she said:

"I will get a cab."

On going to look for one, she saw the man whom Russell had engaged to be near the house, and immediately accosted him, stating her wishes. She was too excited to note his sinister joy, or the alacrity with which he followed her.

The trunks were soon placed upon his truck, and Esther left the house where she had experienced such unlooked-for and undeserved humiliation.

"Where shall I go, Miss?" asked the fellow, all ready to start.

Poor Esther asked herself where. She felt at that moment her utter desolation, realizing that she was houseless, homeless, and friendless.

"Take the trunks to some quiet hotel," she said at length, summoning all her courage and energies. "I am not much acquainted in the city, but there must be some quiet hotel—"

"Just so, ma'am," interrupted the man. "There's the Exeter House, kept by a first rate man, as kind and good as yer own father. I might take you there, if so be you wish to live cheap."

"Yes, that's it; I think that place will do!" re-

sponded Esther. "You can take the trunks there. I know where the house is, and will be there as soon as you are, without doubt."

The man nodded understandingly, and drove away, Esther walking in the same direction.

As the couple passed the corner of the street, the man beheld Russell peering out of the door of a cigar establishment, and exchanged glances of intelligence with him.

"You needn't hurry so, ma'am," said the man, soon after crossing the street, "I will wait till you come if I get there first. It's all right, ma'am; I shall be waiting for you." He turned a convenient corner, and was out of sight before Esther could realize his intentions.

"Surely he's gone in the wrong direction," she thought, "or, perhaps, he means to call somewhere for a trunk or package."

She hurried about the neighbourhood several minutes, in considerable agitation, but, of course, saw nothing of the man, and she became positively alarmed.

"Perhaps he's dishonest," she said, panting with her exertion, "and has run away with my things; I have heard of such actions."

She reflected a moment, and then resolved to hasten to the Exeter House, which she did.

The proprietor was an honest, good natured man, living in rather a humble way, and Esther was at once prepossessed in his favour. She did not hesitate to tell him her troubles, and by the time she concluded he was quite interested in her.

"All we can do, miss, is to wait for the rascal's arrival," he said, in answer to the question with which she concluded her statements. "If you will walk up to the ladies' room, I will remain on the watch for him. You say that you didn't notice the name on his truck?"

Esther explained that she had been too much agitated to take that precaution, and the landlord shook his head regretfully, and said:

"I'm afraid there's to be some trouble about it. Nevertheless the scamp may have gone out of his way as you suggest, to carry a box for somebody else, on the principle of killing two birds with one stone. Come up-stairs and we'll wait a few moments, hoping for the best."

Half-an-hour was spent in quiet watching, and Esther then went down-stairs to consult again with the landlord.

"We'd better give notice to the police," said the host, after some remarks. "I will go with you, and we will take up the particulars by the way."

They left the house together, and proceeded toward the nearest police station.

CHAPTER XV.

How are we tossed on fortune's fickle flood!
The wave that with surprising kindness brought
The dear one to my arms, has snatched it back,
And left me mourning on the desert shore.

Shakespeare.

WHILE these events had been transpiring, the dishonest man had returned toward the cigar establishment mentioned, and met Russell.

"You've done well," said the latter. "You shall have the money. I will walk down to my hotel with you!"

The hotel in question was reached in a few minutes, the baggage stowed away, and Russell then proceeded to count out the man's pay, inquiring:

"Where has she gone?"

"To the Exeter House, sir. She did not seem to be very well posted as to where she should go, and so I suggested the Exeter."

"Very good—you could not have done better. Here is your money."

"But, of course, you will see that there's no trouble made about the trunks?" asked the man, as he pocketed the money.

"Certainly. I am going over to the Exeter House immediately, to see my sister, and will counteract with the landlord any story she may have told him. Have no fears—the baggage is all in the family, you know, and so good day to you."

The man expressed his satisfaction over the job, and went his way, while Russell hurried toward the Exeter House.

He had nearly reached the hotel, with the intention of passing it and reconnoitering, when he perceived Esther emerging from it, leaning on the arm of a gentleman, and the next instant they proceeded down the street toward him.

"Ah! I meet her sooner than I expected!" the villain ejaculated. "So much the better!"

He assumed an air of the utmost unconcern, sauntering along the street in a pretended obliviousness of all external objects. He felt sure that Esther could not pass him without seeing him; nor was he mistaken.

She perceived him when he was yet several rods distant, and he became aware of the fact through the exclamation of joy and relief that escaped her. He looked up, and their eyes met.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed, with an answering exclamation and start. "Esther Willis, as I live!"

He sprang forward to meet her, so jubilant at having brought about a meeting under such circumstances that it was not necessary for him to simulate eagerness.

"What an unexpected pleasure to meet you!" he said, clasping her hand warmly. "I was thinking of you only a few minutes ago, and wondering where you might be."

Esther returned his salutation with considerable feeling, partly owing to her troubles and desolations, and partly to the fact that she really knew nothing against him. She then introduced the landlord to him, and between the couple the plotter was soon informed of the loss of the girl's luggage. He expressed the utmost surprise and regret.

"Turned out of doors—your baggage stolen!" he finally ejaculated, when he had extorted the outlines of the girl's experiences from her. "This comes of not having friends."

It was instantly arranged that Russell should look after the trunks, and that Esther should go back to the Exeter House, and await his movements.

"Have no more care or trouble about it, Esther," he said in his gentlest tones, as he drew her arm within his, and the landlord led the way back towards the hotel. "Fortunately, police, money, and other resources I know just how to work, so that I can almost promise you that the trunks will be forthcoming in a few hours."

On reaching the hotel, Russell saw that Esther was pleasantly situated, procured her a book to read in his absence, enjoined her not to worry, said that he would soon return and report, and then bade her a temporary adieu and departed.

"Nothing could be better," was the first thought of the plotter, as he walked away. "I must manage to kill the next two or three hours, the time I am presumed to be busy with the police."

He entered a popular billiard-room, and was soon deep in the mysteries of this game with a casual acquaintance.

Nearly three hours were thus passed, and Russell then returned to the street.

"It is easy to presume that I have stirred up the police and made herculean efforts to find the lost baggage," he then said to himself. "Yea, and my energetic exertions have been rewarded with success. The trunks are found, and it only remains for me to take them to Esther, at the same time inventing an explanation of their recovery."

He procured a cabman, led the way to his hotel, and was speedily on his way to the Exeter House, with the recovered baggage.

His triumphant return can be imagined. He took care to get rid of the cabman in paying him liberally for his services, and thereupon followed a fabulous narrative respecting the recovered luggage—a narrative which filled the honest landlord with admiration, and inspired Esther with the most positive respect and gratitude toward her zealous benefactor.

"A great feat, Mr. Russell," commented the host, "and I must congratulate the young lady on having such a friend to look after her interests."

He withdrew, bustling about in preparations for dinner, while Esther said to Russell:

"I shall never forget your kindness! I thank you from the bottom of my heart for it!"

"Oh, it is I who am indebted, if there is any indebtedness in the case," he responded. "I had no idea of meeting you, not having seen a sign of you since you came to London. The fact is," he added, with assumed carelessness, "I presumed that you were already married to Moreland."

A look of pain came into the girl's luminous eyes, and her features were momentarily convulsed with pain, so that Russell paused, but he soon resumed, pretending not to notice her emotion:

"But as you are not married, Esther, I doubt not but that Moreland cheers and comforts you, visiting you often, and writing you tender and consoling letters!"

The girl shook her head, answering in trembling tones:

"No, Pierre, I have not seen or heard from Harry since the day I came to the city! I learn that he has failed in business; or rather that the firm is broken up. I know not whether he is living or dead—whether he is ill, calling for me—"

"Not heard from him!" interrupted Russell, with well-acted astonishment. "Why, Esther, you surprise me! Not heard from him or seen him, when he spends nearly every evening at my aunt's house, visiting with Elinor! It can't be possible!"

Esther started to her feet, exclaiming in tones of terrible anguish:

"Then he is not ill? He does not suffer? Oh, heaven! He has deserted me!"

Russell's voice was low and soothing in its perfect gentleness, as he took Esther's hand, and said:

"My poor child! I have been bitter and unjust enough to think, when I saw Moreland's gaiety with Elinor, that he had transferred his affections with your father's fortune!"

A low moan broke from the girl's lips, and in her wild grief she did not notice nor withdraw her hand lying in that of Russell.

"He is poor now," continued the villain, in his soft, sweet tones, "and Elinor's property would not come amiss in building up a new mercantile house. I will not conceal from you, Esther, that I have feared that his ambition would prove stronger than his love—that he would care more for a wealthy bride than for one whose only dower would be a pure and loving heart! Forgive me if I have wounded you, my poor girl!"

Esther could not resist the well-assumed sympathy of his words, and conquering her wild sorrow, she said:

"You do it with a feeling of friendship, for which I earnestly thank you, Pierre. It is well for me to understand his feelings toward me, else I would go on cherishing hope against hope. Oh, he was so good, so noble! I trusted his love as I would my own! I have had feelings of distrust and suspicion during the bitterness of the past few days, but I indignantly banished them, as false to him and to myself! Oh, Harry! Harry!"

She uttered the name of her lover with a wild wail, but Russell soothed her with such tact that she was soon able to proceed:

"I know not what to think. I cannot condemn as false until I know it—and yet why should he neglect me for Eleanor? Oh, a man never loves as a woman loves."

"Say not so, Esther," said Russell, with a passionate energy that sprang from his heart, while the love he really felt for her shone in his brilliant eyes. "Condemn not all men because one has proved himself cold and false."

Esther understood his allusion, and withdrew her hand from his, as she said bitterly:

"Oh, Pierre, I am alone—all alone—"

"Not so, Esther," was his reply, his sweet tones tinged with a deep sadness that touched his listener's heart. "I ask no return to my love, I know that your heart is given to another, who, I fear is striving to forget you; but that fact can never cause any difference in my devotion to you. Call upon me as freely as a brother. Let me smooth your rough pathway, and be a sincere and useful friend to you. I ask no

reward, except the happiness of knowing that I have spared you some pain."

To Esther's innocent mind Pierre Russell at that moment seemed a hero. His delicate attention, his recent service, the hopeless manner in which he spoke of his love, all inspired her with a profound pity for him, as well as contrasted favourably with Moreland's apparent neglect and desertion.

"I accept your friendship, Pierre," she said, again placing her hand in his, "in the same spirit in which it is offered. My heart is crushed and torn, and I am weary of the world; but if you want me for a sister, and if you will be my brother, I will take a sister's interest in your welfare. We can be nothing more to each other."

As Pierre Russell bent to kiss the tiny white hand of the young girl, a strange light of satisfaction shone in his eyes, and a triumphant smile flickered about his mouth.

He had gained a footing, and it would not be his fault if he did not improve it to effect his entire success.

CHAPTER XVI.

Her nature is as far from doing wrong,
That she suspects none.

Shakespeare.

"Your aunt and cousin, then, have come to town?" asked Esther, after a pause. "I so understood—"

"Yes; aunt has bought a house, and is living in great state."

A grave look appeared on Esther's face, and she sighed; it was so natural to compare her own hard portion in life with the position of her step-mother.

"And—Harry—is there frequently?" she faltered, sadly, after a minute's silence.

"Frequently," was the plotter's response. "Pardon me, Esther, for the wounds I am compelled to inflict upon you, but—the fact is—Mr. Moreland is about to take up his residence with my aunt, she having invited him to make his home with her."

"In order to be near Elinor?" Esther ejaculated, in a wailing sort of voice.

"So it seems, since you compel me to state the disagreeable fact," responded Russell, with well-feigned reluctance. "You know not that I am," he added, "a cynic, a scorner of men; and you will remember that I indicated, the day you came to town, some fears for your future. It is my belief, Esther," and the speaker's tones grew more low and sweet, while his manner seemed full of a delicate and unobtrusive sympathy, "that in the days when you were an heiress, Moreland loved you sincerely, with a sort of gratitude to yourself, as well as your father, for the life-long benefits conferred upon him. I say loved you sincerely, perhaps with a sense of duty, knowing that it would please your father—"

Esther moaned bitterly, interrupting him, but soon motioned him to go on.

"Moreland's recent misfortunes," continued Russell, gently, "have possibly deadened the love that was mostly a sense of gratitude; at any rate, he now sees that without money from some quarter he must be content during his life with a clerkship—must bury his splendid business talents in a napkin. As you know, Elinor is a showy, handsome girl, and her dowry would render her doubly attractive to a man who has suffered from recent disappointments and been reduced to poverty."

Esther made no reply, but the hand that Russell still held grew cold, as if the very blood were freezing in her veins.

"But it may not be too late yet," said the villain, softly. "You could call at my aunt's, remind Moreland of the past, and seek to win him back."

"Never!" exclaimed Esther, with womanly pride, her cheeks flushing and her eyes luminous with proud indignation. "If he chooses to desert me, I shall never follow him to lay bare my bleeding heart and beg him to have compassion on me. I do not want pity; I do not want any love that is a part of gratitude, and nothing more; I do not want him to marry me because we are promised to each other. If he wishes it, he is as free as air! If his heart has grown cold to me, if I am less lovely in his eyes since I have been stripped of the fortune that is rightfully mine, if the governors is of less consequence to him than the heiress—then, and her face grew strangely earnest, and her sweet voice grew resolute, "then it is best as it is. I shall be glad to have lost everything to have proved his love. If my impressions are true, let him go. My hand shall never be held out to tempt his return!"

Russell regarded the impassioned girl with ardent admiration, his whole soul doing homage to her bright beauty, her pride, delicacy, and feminine characteristics. The spirit she exhibited but enhanced her charms, and the determination he had formed to make her his wife received new strength and impulse.

"But, Esther," he soon said, in tones that soothed

her, she knew not why. "I did not mean to alarm your pride. Although I love you so ardently," and a look of unutterable sadness appeared in his eyes, "that love prefers your happiness to anything else in the world. Let me go to Moreland, and without compromising your dignity, induce him to return to you."

"No," said Esther, in a firm tone, "it must not be. You wound me, Pierre, by thinking that I would do anything to win him back! The first step must come from him, since my letters have been all unanswered, my assurances of love unheeded!"

"But if he should return to you, you would forgive him?"

Again Esther's face flushed, and her deep grey eyes had in them a look of despairing hope, as she said:

"I would forgive him if his heart had not swerved from me, if he could explain his silence and neglect to me, if I could feel in my inmost heart that he was neither false nor fickle! Then, and then only, would I wed him!"

Looking on her spirited countenance, realizing her proud and womanly nature, Russell felt her words to be true, and that he had gained a sufficient insight into her character to enable him to carry out his plans with every hope of success.

He soothed her by gentle counsels, making no show of sympathy or pity that could wound her, but with infinite tact and art working up her mind against Harry Moreland, yet in such a way that his wicked suggestions and falsehoods could not provoke her to defend her lover. He aroused her pride so effectively that she banished her tears, repressed all signs of the anguish that gnawed at her heart, and strove to be self-possessed and even cheerful.

"I thank you, Pierre, for your disinterested kindness," she said, at length. "You are indeed a friend in need—"

She was interrupted by the entrance of an attendant, who announced that dinner was almost ready, and wished to know if the lady and gentleman would dine at the *table d'hôte*.

Noticing Esther's hesitation, Russell commanded the dinner to be brought up, and asked, as a favour, that no other guests should interrupt them, to which the landlord, fancying the couple reconciled lovers, readily assented, and withdrew.

A neat dinner was soon brought up to them, much to Esther's relief, she having dreaded meeting the gaze of strangers at the hotel, knowing that her pale face and swollen eyes could not fail to attract attention.

Russell served her with the utmost devotedness. She ate merely because Russell desired her to do so.

When they had finished the meal, Russell drew his chair close, and said:

"And now, Esther, let me know your plans for the future. What do you intend to do?"

There was so much protecting interest in his manner, that Esther had no thought of taking offence at his question, and frankly replied:

"I do not know, Pierre. I suppose I had better remain here until I can find another situation as governess."

Russell shook his head. "Pardon me," he said, "but I cannot refrain from advising you to the contrary. Quiet as is this hotel, it is still not the place for a young and beautiful girl. In fact, Esther, any hotel would not do. You ought to be placed in some quiet and respectable family, where you would feel at home, and not be liable to insult or any one's curiosity. If you attempt procuring another situation as governess, your late employer would use her influence against you—for you are too truthful not to say that you have already taught, and in whose family. I advise you to remain quiet a few weeks, and recruit your health and strength, while I look around for a home to suit you."

Esther thanked him warmly for his kindness, and said:

"But where can I find a quiet and respectable boarding-house, Pierre?"

Russell thought a moment, and then answered,

"I know of one kept by a very respectable widow lady, who came originally from the country. She is a motherly old lady, and I can personally recommend her, having boarded with her several months at one time. If you wish we will call upon her now and see if she can take you as a boarder."

Esther assented, with a look and feeling of relief, and hastened to put on her bonnet and shawl, which she had laid aside, while Russell went down to see the landlord. When he returned he found the young girl ready, and presenting so elegant an appearance that he felt a personal pride in her, as if she already belonged to him. He surveyed the rich plain silk dress, the fine Cashmere shawl, the delicate bonnet framing the sweet face, the costly throat veil, not forgetting to note the unexceptionable gloves and chausseurs, and felt a strange pleasure in knowing that

her taste was so exquisite, and that it so well accorded with his own.

"I have a brougham in waiting," he said, when she declared herself ready. "I knew you were unable to walk, and could not bear to have you ride in a common cab. Come!"

He led the way down-stairs and to the carriage, handed her in, gave the order to the driver, and then took his seat beside her, and they drove quietly away.

"Here we are, Esther," he said, as they paused before a plain three-storey brick dwelling and alighted. "I hope we shall be successful in securing rooms here."

He rang the bell, which was quickly answered by a tidy-looking servant girl, who ushered the visitors into the parlour, after Russell had ordered the coachman to wait.

Esther gave a scrutinizing glance at the apartment, and noticed that everything looked neat and homelike, but her observations were cut short by the entrance of the landlady, who proved to be what Russell had described her—a motherly, honest, kind-hearted woman.

"Oh, Mr. Russell! she exclaimed, grasping his hand with genuine pleasure. "I am glad to see you. Have you come back to board with me?"

"I have brought you a boarder, I hope, Mrs. Jones. Allow me to introduce you to Miss Willis."

The ladies exchanged greetings, and Esther flung back her veil, while Russell continued:

"I have brought a friend to you, Mrs. Jones, who has just been bereft of her father, and who wishes to be quiet and retired. She will have no company unless she will kindly allow me to call, and will need your kindest attentions. Have you room for her?"

"I should always find room for one of your friends, Mr. Russell," answered Mrs. Jones. "You were always so quiet and gentlemanly, paying me promptly, and so ready to lend me money when I got cramped for it, with always a kind word to everybody, and never disputing of bills, that I take it as an honour that you send your friends to me. And as it happens, my best rooms were vacated yesterday. Please to step up and look at 'em."

Esther leaned on Russell's arm as they went up the broad staircase, and were conducted to a spacious chamber, with bedroom and bath-room adjoining, all handsomely fitted up.

"I like this place," she said, sinking into an easy-chair by one of the lace-curtained windows. "What do you charge a week for board and lodging with these apartments, Mrs. Jones?"

"Well, they have always brought me two pounds for a single person," was the response.

Esther calculated how many weeks' rest she could afford at the rate of two pounds per week, and was half-resolved to look further for cheaper lodgings, but the cleanliness of the rooms, the new air of the furniture, and, above all, the motherly kindness of the landlady, finally decided her, and she engaged the apartments, paying for the week in advance.

"You had better remain here while I go for the trunks," said Russell, as soon as the landlady withdrew on some errand. "You look so weary that I must take good care of you, lest I lose the little sunshine I now have. And now," he added, as he held his hat in his hand, "let me know the state of your finances, Esther. I am your friend, you know."

With a quivering lip, Esther handed him her purse, which he opened and examined, finding, to his surprise, only a little over twenty pounds in it.

When he handed it back to her, it was filled, with gold and bank-notes.

Esther noticed its phlegmatic condition, and refused to accept a penny of it, or further place herself under obligations to him, declaring that she had money enough for the present, and should earn more before her little fund was exhausted.

In addition to his handsome face and form, Pierre Russell had rare persuasiveness, and he now replied:

"I owed the money to your father, Esther. I lived at his mansion for months, and it is no more than just that I should pay for it now. You are under no obligations to me—it obliges me far more than it can you."

With a gentle persuasiveness, he forced her to accept the money without experiencing any troublesome sense of obligation to him, and then took a temporary leave, returning to the brougham, and driving to the Exeter House for Esther's luggage.

And thus Esther was comfortably settled by the plotter, and in such a quiet and graceful way that she could not have possibly taken umbrage at his proceedings.

He remained awhile with her, encouraging her to look upon the bright side of life, and promising to befriend her in every way in his power.

When he took his departure, with an invitation to call often, he felt that his progress in wooing her would henceforth be rapid and certain.

"The whole project goes on gloriously," he said to himself, as he sauntered away from the girl's new

home. "I must now reconnoitre Moreland, cover up all my past steps, and go on conquering and to conquer. If all's clear, I'll see Moreland in the morning, bring him over to aunt and Elinor, and soon be the lord and master of Esther and her half million!"

(To be continued.)

VALLEY OF MEXICO.

WE began our early march next morning, and kept winding round hills covered with thick woods of pines, and carpeted with a variety of wild flowers, until about eleven o'clock, when we reached a meson on the summit of the mountain, and obtained a view of the far-famed valley of Mexico. Description is tame when one tries to convey the impression which this scene usually makes on all who see it for the first time. It is certainly the most magnificent view in Mexico; perhaps, of the peculiar description, the first in the world.

At an elevation of about 3,000 feet, the spectator sees, as if spread at his feet like a map, the whole of the valley of Mexico, its circumference at the base of the mountains which forms the sides of the mighty basin 120 miles, and at the crest of the mountains 200 miles. The whole of the plain, from the height on which the spectator stands, is distinctly taken in at one view, and the most minute details are distinctly defined and delineated, owing to the remarkable transparency and purity of the atmosphere. The towers and spires of the city of Mexico, twenty-five miles distant, are distinctly seen peering out from the foliage and trees; almost the only part of the valley where trees are to be seen, by-the-by, is that round the city. The remainder of the valley presents the uniform appearance of a large green plain, dotted with white churches, spires, and haciendas, and containing several large sheets of water, the remains of the lakes which are said to have once nearly covered the whole valley. And several small insulated mountains may also be distinctly discerned, the only large objects that rise on the surface of the vast unbroken green plain. The mountains of Popocatepetl, and Iztaccihuatl, its brother giant, rise about twenty miles to the left of the spot where the spectator is standing, though, owing to the bright atmosphere and the sun shining on the snow, they seem only two or three miles distant. The whole of this beautiful valley is hemmed in by a complete circle of stupendously rugged and dark-looking mountains, the rough but sublime setting of nature to one of her most inimitable pictures, a most perfect combination of the sublime and beautiful.

Yes, seen from that elevation, the valley of Mexico is a most glorious and magnificent sight, "but 'tis distance lends enchantment to the view," and as we descend into it, its beauties vanish. The lakes become marshes, the fields are not cultivated, the villages are mud, and the inhabitants wretched looking peons, in rags and squalid misery.

THE readers of the *Bulletin* will doubtless remember the old Indian woman who was said to have reached the age of 200 years, who resided near Placerville in 1855, and of whom a long account was given by the *American* newspaper of that place about that time, and copied into all our journals. This specimen of California antiquity was entirely blind, bald and toothless, and altogether of a most singular appearance. Much doubt has been thrown on the story, but W. Wadsworth, who is said to have written the account of her history and appearance, is a man whose veracity and intelligence is not to be rashly impeached. This old lady is said to have remembered when the Sierras belched forth fire and smoke, with great rockings of the earth, and the sun could not be seen for many days. As newspapers were scarce in 1655, and white men not in California to record such terrible phenomena, the present topography of that part of the State offers the only solution of the old woman's tradition, and which may not be so entirely devoid of truth as might be expected from such a source.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY'S HABITS.—Whately was of the great family of smokers, and his pipe, when its little volcano was extinct, served him for a book-marker. In summer-time he might be seen, of an evening, sitting on the chains of Stephen's-green, thinking of "that," as the song says, and of much more, while he was "smoking tobacco." In winter, he walked and smoked, vigorously in both cases, on the Donnybrook road; or he would be out with his dogs, climbing up the trees to hide amid the branches a key or a knife, which, after walking some distance, he would tell the dogs he had lost, and bid them look for it, and bring it to him. At table, whether as host or guest, he was a supreme talker: wit, humour, learning, pun, fun, sense and nonsense, he poured forth with few of the "brilliant intervals of silence" which other talkers impatiently longed for. It was perilous work to grapple with him; but we think that, in contending with an adversary, he often did what is

done in warfare, prepare the pitfalls, into which he saw his foe man tumble, with infinite laughter on the part of the auditors. When merely "smart" people, like Lady Holland, snapped at him, as Mr. Fitzpatrick remarks, "their teeth only met sparkling granite." There was something of a Johnsonian rudeness about him, with exaggeration, for in a drawing-room, Whately would, in his forgetfulness, lean back in his chair, in front of the fire, and plant his feet nearly as high as the chimney-piece. At the council-table, his heels would sometimes be where his colleagues' heads were—on the table itself. Chairs perished at his coming, for he used them ruthlessly in argument, and the carpet suffered from one of his tricks of whirling the chair round on one leg, while he was speaking.—*Fitzpatrick's "Memoirs of Archbishop Whately."*

CALIFORNIA SILK.—The soil and climate of California are admirably adapted to the growth of the mulberry tree, in all its desirable varieties, to the breeding and feeding of the silk-worm, and to the production of silk, more so than almost any European country, owing to the fertility of the soil and dryness of the climate giving a peculiarly rich and nutritive character to the leaves of the mulberry tree, which imparts a higher, finer, and more delicate quality to the silks produced from them. Certificates from the highest authorities in Europe show that the Californian silk, after being fully tested, carefully analyzed, and compared with European silk, proves to be of the very best quality.

OPIMUM EATING.

OPIMUM is one of those physiological agents which, by the mystery of their effects, excite much premature speculation as to their properties; and it is to this that we must ascribe the extremely incorrect descriptions of its action upon the organism which have appeared even in scientific works of good repute.

One great source of confusion in the popular ideas of the action of this drug has been the disproportionate attention not unnaturally given to its soporific effects, which constitute, however, but a part, and that the least remarkable, of its action upon the system.

In the countries where opium is indigenous, it is an article in daily use with the great majority of the population, by whom it is employed for a very different purpose than that of procuring sleep; in fact, as a powerful and rapidly acting stimulant; and in those localities far larger quantities can be taken without producing any other effect than this, even in the countries of Europe, where the poppy is only a transplanted growth. Taken in still larger quantities, even by the natives of Syria and the East, it proves as decidedly and poisonously narcotic as would much smaller doses taken by an Englishman; and this kind of effect is, doubtless, often seen as a consequence of the abuse of opium by Orientals. But its use is an important and genuine one; it acts as a powerful food stimulant, enabling the taker to undergo severe and continuous physical exertion without the assistance of ordinary food, or on short rations of the latter—a fact to which numerous Eastern travellers testify.

Dr. Barnes relates a striking instance of its power to recruit the exhausted frame:—"On one occasion I made a very fatiguing night-march with a Cutchie horseman. In the morning, after having travelled thirty miles, I was obliged to assent to his proposal of halting for a few minutes, which he employed in sharing a quantity of about two drachams of opium between himself and his jaded horse. The effect of the dose was soon evident in both, for the horse finished a journey of forty miles with great apparent facility, and the rider absolutely became more active and intelligent." Dr. Barnes declares that moderate opium-eating does not appear to shorten life or to decrease vigour, an opinion in which he is supported by numerous competent authorities on the customs of the East—amongst others by Dr. Eatwell, who states that the health of the workmen in the opium factories is quite up to the average standard, and that the effect of the habitual use of the drug on the mass of the people (in China) is not visibly injurious.

To a certain extent, and in certain circumstances, the same remarks would appear to apply to natives of this country, although the doses taken are, as a rule, much smaller than in the East. De Quincey mentions the fact that many poor over-worked folk in towns like Manchester consume regularly a moderate amount of opium; not using it as the means of a luxurious debauch, but simply to remove the traces of fatigue and depression; and the experience of the physicians who know the poor of London would testify to the considerable prevalence of this custom among that class.

It has frequently happened to me to find out, from the chance of a patient being brought under my notice in the wards of a hospital, that such patient was a regular consumer, perhaps, of a drachm of laudanum, or from that to two or three drachms per diem, the same dose having been used for years without any varia-

tion. And I am assured that the practice is very extensively carried on in many parts of the country, just in this way, by persons who would never think of narcotizing themselves, any more than they would of getting drunk; but who simply desire a relief from the pains of fatigue endured by an ill-fed, ill-housed body, and a harassed mind.

These instances appear to me inexplicable, except upon the supposition that they depend on a kind of food-stimulant effect, similar to that which certainly is experienced by the majority of Orientals in taking opium; and they must be carefully separated from that kind of narcotic delirium which is sometimes sought for by the literary dilettante, and of which so vivid an account has been left us in the "Confessions of an Opium-Eater."—"Stimulants and Narcotics—their Mutual Relations, &c." By F. E. Anstie, M.D.

VOICES OF HOME.

They are the tones that haunt the heart
With waking dreams of day,
Until the soul hath borne its part,
And life has passed away.

We hear them round the winter-hearth,
And in the balmy spring,
And 'mid the scenes of summer mirth,
And autumn's laughing ring.

The traveller hears them on his path,
In every singing rill;
Each murmuring tone a power hath
To charm his spirits still.

He hears them in the rustling leaves
That stir 'till the lonely wood,
And where the vale is filled with sheaves,
Ripe for the gard'ner's stood.

The orphan hears them in his dreams,
Still round his cottage-thatch;
The sailor, 'neath the starlight gleams,
While in his midnight watch.

The soldier on the tented plain,
Oft starts with throbbing breast,
To hear them in the bugle's strain,
Then sinks again to rest.

On Life's wide field of joy and woe,
Where hearts are bowed with years,
While travelling in its wintry snow
And through its vale of tears.

The softest tones of music stirred,
To cheer amidst its gloom,
Are when the soul within hath heard
The voices sweet of home.

R. A.

MY MIDNIGHT SMOKE; OR, A DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

THE following narrative is not indebted in the least degree to the writer's imaginative quality; but is simply a transcription of a veritable event in his life, which happened some thirty years ago.

In midsummer of the year 185—, I "let" myself to the house of "Corn, Wheat, and Co., extensive grain-merchants, as agent, or more properly "buyer;" for it was my business, while in the employ of these gentlemen, to travel the grain-growing districts, and buy up all the corn, wheat, &c., which the raisers had not, prior to my calling upon them, disposed of to other parties.

Through the kindness of former employers, and several influential friends, I was enabled, upon my application for the situation advertised by the Messrs. Corn, Wheat, and Co., to put into the hands of those gentlemen letters which at once secured to me their unlimited confidence.

Indeed, so confident was the firm in my integrity, that they gave me full powers to negotiate for purchases according to my own judgment, besides putting into my hands a large amount of funds in the shape of blank drafts over their signature, upon banking-houses in the different counties, which drafts I was to fill out and dispose of as occasion required.

My mode of procedure in the transaction of their business was as follows:

I first established a store-house in a seaport town, or on a line of railroad, and then operated around that centre, in a radius, say of thirty to fifty miles, as the necessity of the case might demand.

I do not consider that a further explanation of the details of my business arrangements would be of interest to the general reader, nor is it necessary to the comprehension of the incident which I am about to relate; therefore I will proceed to the legitimate subject of this sketch without further preliminaries.

In the early part of November, in the before-mentioned year, I established a storehouse, and in the

course of a few weeks had, as I supposed, a full cargo of grain.

My employers had telegraphed me, desiring that I should be as expeditious as possible in loading and forwarding the same, as it was very important that the house should get a large supply into the market at the earliest possible moment, in consequence of a visit of the agents of several large foreign houses for the purpose of making extensive purchases. And I was instructed, in case I should have on hand more than a cargo, to charter a small schooner, or any other small sailing craft, in which to transport the balance.

In due time the work of loading went speedily forward.

Anxious to advance the interests of my employers, for whom I really had great respect and esteem, and eager to secure their commendation, I had made every preparation whereby the job might be quickly despatched.

At the close of the second day's operations, I was with dismay and disappointment, that the stock on hand would not make up a full cargo for the brig. This was indeed a bitter disappointment to me—and I was well assured that, should the vessel arrive with less than a full freight, the Messrs. Corn, Wheat, and Co. would, not unreasonably, after my statement to them and their expectations thereupon, be quite indignant. It was, therefore, with no little perturbation of mind that I made this unexpected and most unwelcome discovery.

What was I to do? What course pursue? I could not safely detain the brig while I went back into the country, yet further than I had already been, to hunt up a sufficient quantity to make up the cargo;—better forward the stock on hand than run the risk, by a week's delay, of getting the grain into the market too late. And yet to disappoint my employers' expectations of a large shipment! I was in a quandary, from which I could see no possible way to extricate myself.

That evening, however, as I sat in the little bar-room of the rude tavern, cogitating upon my dilemma, fortune came to my relief. Mr. Frobush, a gentleman living about twelve miles, a very extensive grain raiser, upon whom I had called to solicit a trade at an early day after my arrival in those parts, but whose entire stock had already been engaged to a firm, sent messenger to inform me that the party who had bespoken his grain had since failed, and that the entire stock was consequently thrown back on his hands, and if I was not already fully supplied, he would now trade with me; adding, that as he had already received a pretty heavy bonus, he could afford to sell at a low figure.

I fairly laughed for joy when this intelligence was communicated to me. Here was a golden opportunity, surely, to advance myself in the estimation of my employers. My spirits, which a moment before were away down below zero, now rose to the other extreme. I determined that Frobush's stock of grain—his whole stock—an immense quantity—should at once be mine, or Corn, Wheat, and Co's.

Hastily summoning the captain of the brig, who was drinking with his mates in an adjoining room, I communicated to him the outlines of my opportune turn of luck, and gave him orders to carry forward the further loading of the grain with all dispatch, placing the supervision of the work in the hands of the first mate. That he should get some conveyance down the river to L—, where he would probably find a vessel, the larger the better, that he could charter for a freight to London.

"Engage a horse of our host here to-night," I said, "and start by daylight to-morrow morning; and use the next twenty-four hours to the very best advantage. Come, captain," I added, noticing that his brows were slightly contracted, and a look of insulted dignity had settled over his sun-browned face, "help me out of this, and you shall not fail to receive your reward. Won't you?" and I held out my hand, which the generous sailor grasped, all his feeling in the matter swept away by my frank appeal for his aid.

"Why, to be sure I will, Mr. Stanwix," he returned, heartily. "Don't mind that little cloud, sir; there's sunshine enough in my nature, rough as it seems, to break through such trifles—don't mind it, sir. I'll attend to this little business for you with pleasure. I'll just go and speak for an animal now. Good night, Mr. Stanwix."

"Good night, captain," I said, inwardly blessing him for his kindness.

I next commissioned the landlord of the house—whose time was not fully occupied with his duties as host—to engage every vehicle suitable to carry grain in the place, and start them as early in the morning as possible towards Frobush's place, following them up himself, and engaging other teams along the whole route. I now ordered the horse which had been in my exclusive hire since I arrived, to be saddled, and made preparations for a night ride of a dozen miles.

The clock was just on the stroke of eight, as I left the door of the inn and mounted the horse—a small animal, but one which I well knew possessed both speed and bottom. The night was dark—the clouds, which had been gathering all day, threatening in the early part of the afternoon to delay our operations, now settled lower and lower with their weight of moisture, and betokened an immediate and heavy fall of rain.

"It'll rain in less than half an hour, Mr. Stanwix," said the landlord, who had followed me to the door, and was now standing there gazing up at the black clouds. "Better wait till morning, sir. It is powerful dark, and the road 'tween here and Frobus's is none of the best to get over, even in a bright day. You'd better wait."

"No," I returned, decidedly. "My business won't admit of any waiting. I think I may reach Frobus's before it rains; if I should not, a wet jacket will do me no harm, as I am proof against such things. Hunter and I have been over the road twice before, and I guess he's pretty well acquainted with the channel. Good night, Mr. Brasher," and I touched my horse with the whip, and rode out into the darkness.

"Don't miss the right-hand turning, 'bout six miles ahead!" shouted the landlord.

"Thank you; I shall remember," I replied.

The first two or three miles of the road was, I knew, in very good condition, and I pressed Hunter into a gallop, and gave myself up to self-congratulations and calculations upon the probable favourable results which would follow my commendable zeal in my employers' behalf.

I was just on the point of fancying myself a partner in the firm, when I was suddenly aroused from my reverie by the heavy drops of rain that had commenced to fall; and at the same time Hunter slackened his pace, and seemed to pick his way along the road with cautious and slow steps. Faster and heavier fell the rain, and the darkness was so intense that I could with difficulty see my horse's head. The road apparently grew more irregular, and my progress was reduced to a slow walk.

I dared not urge Hunter to a quicker pace, for fear that he might stumble and break both our necks. And now occurred to my mind the landlord's warning, not to miss the turning which led off from the main road to Frobus's place. Surely, I thought, I must have come a good six miles; but whether the horse had instinctively turned to the right at the proper place, or kept straight on, I could not possibly determine.

I strained my eyes in the vain endeavour to distinguish surrounding objects—nothing but inky blackness met my sense of vision. I judged at this point by the condensed silence, as it were, and a sound as of rain-drops pattering on the leaves, that I was passing through a wood.

Then I felt assured that I had missed the road, for I had passed through no grove or forest on my previous visit to Frobus's. This state of affairs was certainly very unpleasant under the circumstances; and I had just decided to turn my horse's head and retrace our steps, when I discovered, simultaneously with Hunter, a faint glimmer of light some few yards in advance of us.

To say that the sight was a cheering one would but half express the gratification that I experienced upon observing this sign of human existence growing out of that chaotic darkness. My jaded horse gave a low whinny and quickened his steps towards the point from whence the light proceeded.

In two or three minutes I found myself before a habitation—the style of architecture, the extravagance or plainness of which, owing to the darkness, I could not determine—and in another moment I had, with the butt of my whip, rapped smartly upon the sash of the window which emitted the rays of light. A door was quickly opened, and a man appeared at the opening. After the usual salutation, I said:

"I believe I have missed my way, sir. I am on the way to William Frobus's—is this the direct road?"

"William Frobus! But, bless me!" said the man, interrupting himself, "get off from your animal and come in out of the rain. I dismounted and stood in the doorway, holding the bridle in my hand: "William Frobus—William Frobus—why, sir, you're at least thirteen miles from his farm. You're on the road to W—; and Frobus lives in M—. Yes, it's a good thirteen miles to Frobus's."

Well, thought I, so much for trying to catch old Time by the forelock.

"Where did you come from, if I might be so bold?" asked the man, who stood staring at me curiously.

"Well," I replied, "I left Brasher's tavern, in S—, at eight o'clock, intending to reach Frobus's to-night, but—"

"Yes, I see," interrupted the man; "missed the turning in the dark."

"Just so. Thirteen miles! Phew! How are your

accommodations, sir? Can you put myself and horse up for the night?"

"You're right welcome—right welcome to such as we hev, though poor they be. Come in, sir; I'll take your animal. Here, Ralph, take this horse round to the shed. Give him a bit of a wipin' off, and some corn, will ye?"

The person summoned appeared, took the bridle from my hand, and led Hunter away.

As Ralph, as the man had called him, passed me in the doorway, I could not help noticing his extraordinary height and muscular proportions. I glanced up at his face, but in the dim light could only see a huge mass of dark, bushy hair and whiskers.

I turned and followed my host into the house, which was within rude and unfinished. He was an elderly man, rough and homely in his speech and looks, but, I judged, frank, generous, and industrious. I was somewhat surprised at the order and neatness which was apparent about the room; and, notwithstanding there was no other person visible than the man who had welcomed me and the tall fellow who had taken my horse to the shed, yet I instinctively felt that a woman's hand had arranged and beautified—if I may use the expression in this connection—the apartment.

My judgment, or instinct, was verified in a moment by my host's opening a door at my left, and calling:

"Here, old woman! and you, Olive! here's a stranger wants somethin' to eat, and a bed to sleep in; so git up, both on ye."

In a few minutes both mother and daughter issued from the bedroom, and were soon busied in preparing me a meal of bread and fried pork, notwithstanding my earnest expostulations to the contrary. The old lady was a very respectable, motherly-looking old woman, and her appearance and language led me to think she had known more prosperous days. Olive, the daughter, was a fair, brown-haired girl, with mild, pensive eyes, and a sad cast of countenance. If there was any passion or enthusiasm in her nature, it was not outwardly manifest, but covered under the cloud of her life.

Scarcely half an hour had elapsed when I was invited by the mother to seat myself at the table, which was covered with a clean cloth, where a plain, but wholesome meal was set out, and to which, I must confess, I did ample justice, notwithstanding I had eaten a hearty supper at Brasher's hardly three hours before. While I was eating, Ralph came in, and took a seat near the window.

"Rain now, Ralph?" asked my host.

"No," replied the man, in harsh, gruff tones; "the clouds are breaking away overhead, and the moon will be shining as bright as ever in an hour's time."

Good, thought I. The work will not be delayed to-morrow.

After finishing my supper, and thanking the family for their kindness, I rose, went to the door, and looked up to the sky. The clouds were indeed scattering, and the moon's rays were tinging their ragged edges with silver light. Turning back into the room, I observed that as my business was very important, and time to me, under the circumstances, of more value than comfort, I thought I had better start again, and try to reach Frobus's that night.

To this proposition, however, the old people would not listen. The road was just as bad, they said, as it was when I passed over it an hour before, notwithstanding the rain had ceased, and I should only get myself into further trouble.

"Besides, sir," joined in Ralph, "I noticed your pony was lame in a foot, as I led him round to the shed."

"We kin keep ye jist as well as not," said the old man, in a kind voice.

"Yes," said his wife, "and give you an airy breakfast, and start you on your way—at daybreak, if you want."

"You had better remain," pleaded Olive, her mild eyes glancing up into my face.

I finally determined to accept their hospitality, and take an early start in the morning.

We sat and chatted another half hour, during which I naturally explained my urgent business at Frobus's, and also the capacity in which I was engaged, remarking upon my former extensive purchases of grain, my employers immense business, etc., etc. Upon consulting my watch, I found that it was already after ten o'clock, and as I was tired, and beginning to yawn, I requested to be shown to my bed.

I found that the room occupied by the two women when I arrived had been set to rights and assigned to me. To this I expostulated in vain. My host and hostess assured me that there was plenty of room in the house, small though it appeared, and that I would oblige them by accepting the apartment. Of course I could not demur after this, and entered the room at once. As I passed through the door, I turned partly around to bid the several members of the

family "good night," and to my surprise, caught Ralph's eyes fixed upon me with an expression so full of wickedness, that a chill crept through my whole frame—as though the life-current flowing through my veins was swiftly congealing. I had remarked during the evening that Ralph's features were quite repulsive in their repose, but now I thought they assumed an expression of malignity. I did not appear to notice the circumstance, and cast my glance in another direction in search of Olive, and was still more astonished to discover the young lady's eyes fastened upon Ralph's face with a look of anxiety and fear.

When I had entered the apartment and closed the door, I sat down on the edge of the rude, but clean-looking bed, and fell into a strange and horrible train of thought, in which I fancied myself attacked by the Hercules-like fellow in the adjoining room, his object being to rob me of the drafts in my possession; that I determined to lose my life sooner than part with the valuable papers; that I struggled desperately with the ruffian, was nearly overpowered, but finally overcame him.

I could scarcely suppress a laugh as, by a strong effort of the will, I disengaged my mind from its fantasies. What absurd ideas, I mentally exclaimed! And my ridiculous imagining concerning his eyes—how foolish! Why, what possible motive could he have in regarding me with any such expression as I had attributed to him? And even supposing that he had any evil designs against my life or the property in my charge, was it probable that he would have run the risk, by a chance discovery on my part of this demonstration, of forewarning me? Reasoning thus while I was throwing off my garments, I had pretty well persuaded myself by the time I was comfortably laid out in bed, that what I had observed, if indeed it was real, was attributable to some other cause, and directed against some other object than myself.

In vain for the next two hours did I woo, with all the persuasive powers of which I was master, the goddess of sleep. Not a smile would the fickle jade bestow on me.

I placed myself in every position which the human form is capable of assuming; I forced my mind to run in channels of thought which I had heard would certainly conquer wakefulness, and resolutely closed my eyes, determined not to open them again till the courted power had touched my lids with her magic wand.

But all to no purpose.

Some stronger influence than hers was upon me, which she could not overcome.

And now the same unpleasant reflections that had disturbed my mind two hours before began to return, with a seemingly concentrated force. I must banish, by some means, these brain-visions. But how? They seemed to cling to my mind as pertinaciously as did the Old Man of the Sea to the back of the unfortunate sailor.

Ah! a lucky thought at last—an infallible eradicator! I would get up and indulge in a smoke—not the feeble, unsatisfactory puffing of a cigar, but from my favourite meerschaum—my faithful, cheering, sympathizing companion of the past three years!

Was it coloured?

Coloured! amber and wine-tinted, reader—more exquisitely superb in its radiance than the fairest gem sparkling in royalty's diadem! sweeter than kisses from Bacchus's wine-stained lips! more soothing and cheering in its influence than the breathings of an Italian maiden's melody!

Thoughtless that I had been—a ten minutes' siesta would have calmed my excited mind, and lulled me to sweetest repose at the first; and my neglect of this customary evening indulgence had probably caused all my imaginings and wakefulness which had been so annoying. Yes, I would smoke!

I arose, partially dressed myself, and producing my pipe and tobacco-pouch from my portmanteau, filled the capacious bowl with genuine "Turkish." But I would not sacrifice decency to comfort—I must not scent the ladies' bed-chamber with the fumes of tobacco. Swinging open the heavy board shutter—the only glazing the window could boast—I stepped quietly out on the greensward. Upon glancing around I found that I was at the back of the house, and at a little distance—some ten or twelve rods—stood the rude shed where I conjectured my horse was housed. After lighting my pipe, I strolled along towards the apology for a stable, with the intention of looking after Hunter's comfort, and giving him a measure of grain, that he might be in condition for an early and rapid drive in the morning. Everything around me was still and silent as a graveyard; even the yellow leaves of the stunted oaks at my right were motionless and quiet; and the great round moon, white and pure as silver, rode through the mid-sky.

I had nearly reached the shed, and, under the influence of the hour and the tranquillity of the scene, was just repeating Hamlet's soliloquy—"Now is the very witching hour of night," etc.—when suddenly I

fancied that I heard a man's voice proceeding from the interior of the shed. I instantly stopped and listened, to assure myself that I had not been deceived. No; I again heard the sound, and in a louder, deeper key than before.

What can this mean? I asked myself—at this hour—in this region? Well, perhaps the two men repaired hither to sleep, giving up their beds to the women, as they had given me theirs; and I was about to turn in another direction when a second thought suggested itself—why should they be awake now? My mind was unaccountably disturbed. I could give no satisfactory answer to Reason's last inquiry. Some power, the expression of whose influence seemed like that which had forced me to wakefulness, now urged me forward to an investigation of the cause of my alarm. I approached the rude shed with noiseless footsteps, taking care to keep in its shadow. Placing my eye to a crack between the rough boards, I endeavoured to penetrate the darkness within, but in vain; I could not distinguish an object. I next placed my ear to the crevice. Great heavens! the first words I caught, in the harsh tones of Ralph's voice, thrilled me with horror:

"I tell you *he must die*. Our fortunes are in that bag of his—five thousand pounds at least, perhaps more."

Here another voice, which I recognised as that of the old man, broke in, but his tones were so low that I only caught his concluding words:

"No need of killin' the youngster. We can get his money without doing that, Ralph."

"Yes, you old fool!" exclaimed Ralph, in an angry tone, "and stand trial for it. No, no! my name's Ralph Hurtle—and Ralph Hurtle don't do things in that way! Now, this is the easiest job I ever had on my hands. This chap comes here in the night, unbeknown to anybody but our little family; we will kill him and his horse, bury 'em deep; secrete the money; swear to the women folks that he started back before they were up—do this, and who'll be the wiser, hey?"

"Well, but—I—the fact is, Ralph, I don't want the chap's blood on my hands," persisted the old man, in a voice that I fancied trembled with some emotion.

"Blood! ha! ha!" answered Ralph, sinking his voice so low that it was with difficulty I could hear his words. "You old hypocrite! you are a fine one to whimper over a drop of blood. Why, your hands are red now with that Jew pedler's blood, who came here on just such a night as brought this youngster, but who now sleeps yonder under the lee of the cliff, while his pack—"

"Hush, Ralph—for God's sake, hush! I didn't strike a blow—you know I didn't!" cried the old man, interrupting his companion in his fearful disclosure.

"Oh, no! you didn't strike, but you stood by and saw the deed done—you paid for your farm with his gold—you dressed your wife and gal in his finery—you dug his grave—you—"

"No more—no more, Ralph! Oh, my poor old woman, and the gal, how they would curse me if they knewed!" groaned the old man in a tone of agony.

"Well, well, old dad—for you know Olive and I will be married next month, and then you will be my dad—don't take on so—I shan't blow on you to the women folks. But, you see, I need a good share of this fellow's money for a marriage portion to my wife—and you need a share, too, to stock your farm here; so we must have it—and you must do your part of the work. Remember, now, no flinching. Why, it's only a good smart blow of my knife, and it's all over."

I wished to hear no more. My mind was perfectly steady—no fear, no anxiety. My peril was now naked before me, and I was ready and willing, nay, eager to meet its onset. I would punish this ruffian Ralph as he deserved; I would save the old man from being an abettor to another crime; I would rescue the gentle Olive from a fate which I doubted not she dreaded more than the approach of even death itself.

My plan was already formed. I had, upon retiring, placed my revolver—a Colt's—under my pillow—a habit of mine always when travelling.

I would return to the apartment, arm myself with the weapon, and, secreted behind the dresses hanging on the wall, shoot the villain as he was in the act of searching the bed to take my life. I must be sure my first shot should be a fatal one; for if I should miss my aim, or only wound him, he might spring upon me, and with his giant strength get the advantage, and finally consummate his purpose.

With this hastily formed plan, I had just turned to leave the spot, when, to my extreme disgust, the two men quitted the shed at the same moment. Silently I drew back into the shadow, and watched with beating heart their movements.

Ralph was still talking earnestly, though in tones so low, that I could only now and then catch a word or syllable.

Finally they both started for the house. Greatly to my satisfaction, I saw them pass round to the front

part of the house, instead of effecting an entrance to my room, as I was fearful they would do, by the window from which I had gained egress. Had Ralph taken the latter course, I should have been obliged to save my life by instant flight, and leave my effects in their hands—for the present, at least.

I remained in my position a minute, perhaps, after they had disappeared, fearful lest one or both might return and discover me before I had re-entered the room. Then I turned and rushed towards the house. A moment would suffice, when I had once gained the apartment, in which to prepare myself for the reception of the assassin, for I did not doubt that Ralph would undertake to perform the murderous deed alone.

I reached the window—threw one leg over the low sill—my head, shoulders and body were inside, and I was just in the act of drawing the other leg after me, when the door, which was directly opposite the window, was quickly but softly swung back, and to my instant horror, the Herculean figure of Ralph darkened the aperture. One glance served to show him about how matters stood; in his judgment, probably, I had become alarmed, and was about to make my escape with the coveted treasure. With a look which I shall never forget to my dying day, and a muttered curse, he dashed towards me, his right hand claspings a long, murderous-looking butcher-knife.

For an instant I was paralysed at the extremity of my situation—but it was only for a single pulse-beat of time, for I am not a coward. The necessity for quick, decisive action was so apparent that, without hesitating to form a single idea as to the course I should pursue, only feeling that my time to die had surely come, with the simultaneous determination, desperate as it may appear, to sell my life at its greatest cost—with these mad thoughts flashing through my brain, I leaped, with the blind fury of a lioness pressed to her death by the hunters in her lair, towards the huge villain, and met him with a force which he little anticipated.

I am a small man—hardly of the medium size—but supple and wiry, and possessing no mean degree of natural strength; but at that moment I seemed possessed of twenty times that strength; I felt that I could successfully cope with my giant adversary. Aye, had there been a whole legion of desperadoes menacing me at that moment, each as towering and massive as the ruffian before me, I should have unhesitatingly dashed upon them, charged as my soul was with a desperate fury beyond all control.

I had not the slightest thought for my peril or the almost inevitable consequences attendant upon my mad course. My sole thought was that before me stood a power for my destruction—a power, nevertheless, which I must combat with all the energy of mind and muscle and sinew which I possessed. Therefore, ere Ralph had regained his equilibrium and presence of mind after the severe and stunning shock I had given him, I had, with my left hand, clutched his wristpipe with a grasp that, on the throat of an ordinary man, would have instantly stopped his breath and taken away all power of action. But not so with my giant-like antagonist; the advantage I had gained only seemed to give him additional strength, and to render him more furious.

"Curse you," he gasped in a husky tone, "take that!" and the huge villain, towering head and shoulders above me, aimed a blow at my breast with his knife.

But the stroke did not reach me; for with a quick, sideling blow, I struck his arm as it descended, half-paralyzing that member, and sending the weapon ringing against the opposite wall.

"Devil!" he muttered, between his set teeth, "you shall pay for that blow with your heart's blood. Durgin, Durgin, I say, bring my knife. Quick, he's choking me—quick, Durgin!"

There was no reply to this summons—no assistance rendered him.

I spoke no word; I do not know that I had a thought. I did not even seem sensible of the terrible struggle in which I was engaged. The blow by which I had crippled the ruffian's arm, and saved myself from the intended stab, was totally without volition on my part; and although I remember giving the blow, and remarking the effect, I have no recollection of observing that he was about to strike. A saving power—for I can give it no other name—seemed to rule and direct my actions without regard to the mind.

Suddenly, however, I seemed to recover my individuality—to understand my situation, and to comprehend the hopelessness of the struggle. Pain was the medium which had restored my consciousness, as it were, for Ralph's powerful grasp was now at my throat, and the suffocating torture was growing more intense with every instant. In vain, with all the power which my already strained muscles were capable of, did I compress his throat within my grasp. As well might I hope to strangle a boa-constrictor, with my feeble strength,

as my antagonist. In vain I tried now, to utter my last words on earth—a curse on the wretch who was thus about to send my soul before its Maker, unconfessed and unprepared. But even then, when Death's skeleton form loomed in mid-air before my distended eye-balls, ready to clutch, with his bony fingers, his anticipated victim, a flame of hope, like the last brightening flicker of an expiring candle, kindled in my mind. I thought of my revolver under my pillow. But, cruel chance! the bed itself unluckily stood at the opposite side of the room. Could I disengage myself from the villain's grasp? No—that was utterly impossible. But I must—must reach that bed; my life was there. I might force him, by degrees, towards it. My life and strength must hold out until this was accomplished. He would be ignorant of my motive, and would not, therefore, see the necessity of thwarting my purpose.

Slowly, inch by inch, every instant an age to me, did I force the ruffian's huge form towards the bed. Nearer and nearer to the desired point did we approach, until with my right hand I could almost touch the pillow. Another half foot and I was saved! But—I shudder when I remember it—at this critical moment, when my desperate hope was nearly realized, when another minute of reason and strength would have given me back to life, even then I felt the death-chill grasp my limbs, and my reason toppling from its throne. My eyes seemed dropping from their sockets, and the veins in my forehead seemed bursting, one by one. I strove once more to arouse my dying faculties and wasted power for another effort—the last. In vain! I tried to cry out—the sound gurgled in my throat. My arms dropped powerless by my side, and I should have sunk on the floor at Ralph's feet, had he not, seeing my helpless condition, dashed me on the bed, and with a horrid curse and muttered threat, sprang across the room for his knife.

The instant my throat was free, and I had drawn a single respiration, I knew that I was saved. Reason and strength returned as by magic. As quick as thought, and while the ruffian's back was towards me, I turned the pillow and grasped the revolver, and though time was so precious, I could not refrain from pressing its trusty barrel to my lips. The click! click! of the trigger as I cocked it, startled Ralph. He turned quickly, holding the recovered knife in his hand, and met the muzzle of the weapon pointed full at his head. A cry of terror burst from his lips, and for an instant he stood there motionless and rigid as a statue. Then, with an impression as if a howl of despair, his knife uplifted and his fierce eyes fastened upon my own with a furious glance, he dashed with the fury of an enraged bull towards me. Ere he had taken the second step I fired, and the huge ruffian fell, shaking the house to its foundations. I then fell exhausted and almost senseless beside the body.

Thus ended, dear reader, my desperate struggle for life. I might expatiate upon the events that followed—the entrance to the room of the old man and female of the house, who were aroused by the report of my pistol, and the kind attentions I received at their hands; my setting out at an early hour, attended by Durgin, and my arrival safely at Frobus's; my purchase, at a great bargain, of his immense stock of grain, and its speedy transmission to S—; the pleasure and satisfaction of my employers, and my reward, &c. J. S. L.

EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN.—Hairdressing and cutting offer a good maintenance to clever, industrious women with capital. Hairdressing can be learnt very easily, as hairdressers are in the habit of teaching ladies' maids for a premium. It is more difficult to learn haircutting, as men are trying to keep this trade exclusively in their own hands, and will not teach it. Several women, however, have learned, and can teach it. A clever, quick woman might learn the art by having her own hair cut three or four times at different shops, and going with her friends to see their hair cut. We know several ladies who much dislike having their hair dressed or cut by a man, and if a woman was to open a smart shop in a good part of London, and advertise, she would probably get much custom. The Society for the Employment of Women would probably recommend her, and be glad to send her apprentices. There are also, probably, openings in large country towns. One very respectable person has set up at Stockton-on-Tees, and is doing well, having employment enough for her two sisters as well as for herself. She goes her rounds into the country, visiting smaller towns and gentlemen's houses. It would be necessary to join wig and frizette making, &c., to the hairdressing, and also to sell combs, brushes, pomatum, &c. We believe that women with capital might often obtain an entrance into business by purchasing the goodwill and shop of a tradesman about to retire. It would always be absolutely necessary to serve for at least six months in the shop as an assistant before paying the money, as no one could

possibly know how to conduct a business without experience; this arrangement would, moreover, prevent deception with regard to the amount of business transacted. Surprise is often expressed that women, when left unprovided for, do not more frequently enter domestic service, and it is sometimes hinted that since they do not choose to become servants, they cannot be in very great distress; the truth is, domestic service, like everything else, requires special training, and can seldom be entered upon after early youth.

PATHAN WAR-DANCE.

Here is an account of an entertainment which few readers could have witnessed:

The officers of the 20th Regiment, Punjab Infantry, lately entertained their guests with an exhibition of the sword-dances of the warlike tribes serving in the regiment. The performances began with the war-dance of the Pathans. The pipers and drummers, genuine Pathan musicians, supplied the weird and monotonous music, to which the dancers kept time with their paces, movements, and the brandishing of their tulwars.

The dance was a series of studied attitudes, timed steps and advances, accompanied with various drawing-outs and rapid brandishing of the tulwar overhead. The movements were continued in a circle around the group of musicians. The rapid whirling of the tulwars, and the swift and telling cuts which the dancers laid about them, naturally raised a dread in the minds of the spectators that the dancers would injure themselves or their neighbours. But nothing could exceed the extraordinary tact with which the dancers, when they approached each other, guided their tulwars, without reducing the velocity or the variety of their flourishes.

The Pathans were succeeded by the Punjaubees Mussulmans, whose display was less warlike but more skilful. Two tall and lithe men engaged in single combat apparently, advancing and retreating, and whirling their tulwars with surprising rapidity over their heads and shoulders, and under their arms, exhibiting much power and pliability of wrist and shoulder.

One of the men subsequently performed a series of singular and grotesque feats with the tulwar; forming an arch of his body with one hand and one foot on the ground, and the face uppermost, and propelling himself round in a circle with the other foot, he executed a variety of the most astonishingly rapid flourishes with his tulwar, to the imminent risk of his nose and ears.

Standing erect on one foot, and closing his eyes, he whirled his body round rapidly, and while so engaged, sheathed and unsheathed his tulwar in a variety of positions, before him, upon his forehead, upon his head, and behind his back.

A number of men then engaged in a round dance with tulwars, similar to the dance of the Pathans.

The next performance was a more peaceful dance, with shields, but without tulwars. The dancers hopped and skipped around the pipers, keeping time with the music, and noting the conclusion of each bar by simultaneously stooping down and striking their shields on the ground.

The Dogras, a less warlike tribe, inhabiting the territory of the Maharajah of Cashmere, concluded the exhibition with a fencing match with short sticks. The combatants had each two sticks, which they used together, employing both hands in performing the same movements with both sticks. Keeping time with the music, they executed with great dexterity and precision a variety of blows and guards, advances and retreats, and other feints.

ASCENT OF MONT BLANC IN A SINGLE DAY.—Mr. A. W. Moore, writing from Chamouni, says: "It has hitherto been customary for persons making the ascent of Mont Blanc to devote two days to the expedition, the first night being passed either in the cabin on the Grands Mulets, or the still more wretched hut on the Aiguille du Gouté. This course necessitates a very large supply of provisions and the engagement of porters at considerable expense, to carry them up to whichever night-quarters may be selected. I therefore venture to trouble you with a few notes of an ascent made on Saturday, the 2nd inst., when I had the pleasure of proving the practicability of accomplishing the whole distance in a single day, thereby reducing the charge for provisions, and entirely obviating the necessity for porters. Accompanied only by my guide, Christian Almer, I left the rough but clean little inn known as the Pavillon Bellevue, above the Col de Voza, at 2 a.m., reached the top of the Aiguille du Gouté at 10.10 a.m., and the summit of Mont Blanc, *vis à vis* the Bosse du Dromadaire, at 3.5 p.m. The descent to Chamouni was effected by the ordinary

route of the Corridor, Grand Plateau, and Glacier des Boissons. By 9.30 p.m. we were within half an hour of the village of Chamouni, but in the darkness missed the way through the lower part of the forest; and although, as we subsequently saw, the track was close to us, we were unable to extricate ourselves till daylight. But for this unfortunate *contretemps*, Chamouni would have been reached by 10 p.m. The excessive time occupied by the expedition (twenty hours, including halts to the extent of only one hour and a half) was caused by the unusually dangerous condition of the Aiguille du Gouté, the ascent of which took two hours longer than usual, in consequence of the rocks being coated with ice. Under ordinary circumstances, a pedestrian in good condition might fairly hope to accomplish the entire 'course' in eighteen hours. I may mention that my provisions for the day, including three bottles of wine, cost the sum of 8*fr.*, and that, although the mountain had not been before ascended this year, Almer had no difficulty in leading me up and down, unaided."

CATHERINE SEDLEY.

A MAGNIFICENT room in the palace of King James of England is the scene where our sketch is laid. Everything which can mark kingly splendour was gathered within those four walls. The hangings were of superb green velvet, starred with gold, and the couches and chairs were of the same rich and costly material. At the immense windows the curtains were of heavy silk, partly shaded with others of richly embroidered lace, and looped back with coils of gold cord and long tassels, hanging to the floor. Through the interstices of lace and silk folds the park could be seen to advantage; the deer lying beneath the grand old oaks of the Whitehall domain, or gazing at the reflection of their branching antlers in the beautiful little ponds and mimic lakes that gave them lovingly back to view.

Superb flowers, arranged in vases of rare crystal, or in porcelain set in gold filigree, stood upon little ebony stands, scattered here and there about the apartment, their fragrance enhanced by the addition of the most subtle scents sprinkled upon their leaves, and filling the air with almost overpowering odours.

A low frame of ebony, supporting a slab of the purest white marble, partly covered by a cushion of emerald velvet, stood between the windows. On this lay the finest specimen of that breed of dogs now called King Charles' spaniel. The long silken ears hung over the edge of the small cushion, and flung their length of matted floss upon the white marble.

Near this was a small writing-table, and beside it was a chair, the richness, beauty, and immense size of which might have been easily mistaken for a throne.

Its occupant was a woman whom it is difficult to describe. A glitter of diamonds from brow to girdle, a cloud of lace, a pair of tiny shoes, embroidered with seed pearls, a sheen of richest satin, a mantle of royal purple, combined at the throat with clasps of gold of rarest workmanship—these were the outward adornments, and they fitted the place where they shone and glowed.

But the brow beneath the diamonds was low, seamed, and irregular; the neck and throat, seen by glimpses through the rich lace and at the broad opening of the mantle, were yellow and dingy-looking. There was no fairness nor beauty in the face, no grace nor majesty in the lean, angular form, no plumpness nor dimples upon the hands and arms, long, thin, and with almost an orange hue pervading the shrunken skin.

One beauty in that array of ugliness only served to make its contrast conspicuous, and did not redeem it in the least. The eyes were full, black, and lustrous—wide-open; fearless, insolent eyes, over which the lashes never seemed to droop. People wondered if they ever slept.

There was an uneasy expression upon the face, that spoke of some wild wish ungranted—something beyond all these rich surroundings, of which she was not quite secure. The frequent nervous claspings of the thin hands, so tight that the sharp points of the diamonds entered the flesh and brought tiny blood-drops upon the fingers, showed that all was not right within.

"Oh," she murmured, passionately, "why was I not made beautiful? With beauty, I would have dared any woman on earth to take his heart from me. Nor shall it be, even now. I will not brook it. By the heavens above, I will show this proud foreign dame that she is only second to me, after all. Ho, my little page, what have you there? Quick, boy!"

The child was about to kneel, to present a letter upon the silver salver on which he held it, but her impatience prevented this act, and she eagerly snatched it from the tray, tearing it open and seeming to devour its contents with those bold black eyes.

The next moment the paper she held was torn into small bits, and scattered like snowflakes over the chair and the floor. The little spaniel threw them off his silken ears, upon which a cloud of them had alighted; but, for the first time, she did not try to soothe his annoyance.

She sprang to her feet, and paced the long room up and down, up and down, with rapid steps, and a heightened colour on her sallow cheek.

Could this be Catherine Sedley, the bold and insolent rival of Mary of Modena? or was it one whose soul was lashed by furies?

Her quick, sharp breath, or some movement of her dress, disturbed one of the little fragments of the paper she had torn. It alighted just before her, and her eye caught the words, "Leave Whitehall and go to a house in St. James' Square."

"God's death!" she shrieked out. "Does he think to compel me in that way? Does he think I will give place to that soulless, insipid apology for a queen? Go from Whitehall? Never! I will never give up what I have sacrificed my soul for. Pitiful, heartless man. How dare he ask me to go away? Go to St. James' Square? Not if all his myrmidons stood at my back!"

She paused in her passionate speech, and two great shining tears—seemingly too large for mortal eyes to contain—swelled the brilliant orbs, and rolled, unwiped, upon the sallow cheek.

She arose and walked again, forth and back, until the tide of impetuous feeling had calmed itself down. Then she sat down to the little table, and drew an ebony writing-dek towards her. With hands that trembled like slender reeds, she wrote upon a narrow parchment, folded it in a silken envelope, and fastened it with gold wire twisted around it.

"Herbert, take this to the king. See that thou givest it to no other hand, not even the queen's."

Her tears were dried up in the hot flush that came up when she spoke of the queen—her hated rival in the king's affections.

"He will write me another cold, calm note, in answer to my words of fire," she said, aloud. "He has not the courage to come to me and say, 'Catherine Sedley, I ask you to give me back my heart, that I may repent and seek heaven before it is too late.' And if I say, 'What of her who has sinned with you?' he will reply, 'Being a woman, there is no hope for you, in life or death.' And how know I that there is?"

This mood lasted not long, and another succeeded. She resumed her wild walk across the room, wringing her hands, and exclaiming bitterly against those who had widened the distance between her and the king.

"By heaven! they shall rue the day when they first interfered with Catherine Sedley. No matter who set the ball in motion, queen, courtiers, or confessor, they shall taste my power, feel my revenge, see me set above them in his affections—ay, and in state, too! There have been kings ere now who have repudiated queens, and taken dearer ones to the throne. And I am dear to him!"

"Dear? Yes, dear as the breath he draws, my Catherine!" said a voice in her ear.

The king had entered unheard, and now stood beside her, his arms encircling her.

"I knew you would never leave me, Catherine, and I only yielded to the tiresome entreaties of two people, who are not your best friends, to make the proposition they desired me to present you. And you answered it just as I supposed you would, and by my faith in woman, I can adore thy trust and devotion, if not thy beauty."

A scornful smile curled the lips of the woman before him.

"Beauty! beauty! When did I ever think of being called beautiful? No, if I have been proud, it has been of other things than that. I have no beauty, and I am glad of it. They cannot charge your notice of me to a pretty face. Beauty! I despise it!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the monarch. "You can't afford to despise it, Kate. You don't despise your own beautiful eyes. If you do, I shall chide your bad taste. To me the stars of heaven are not so dear."

The words fell lovingly on the ears of the deeply-excited woman. A faint flush rose to the sallow cheek, making it almost beautiful. The restless look softened away from the lustrous eyes, leaving them moist and gentle; the tightly-clasped hands relaxed their hold on each other, and one was laid, half fondly, on the shoulder of her royal lover.

Had it not been for the hated image of Mary of Modena, that came between her and the king, turning all her joys and hopes to poisoned chalice of rivalry and hate, she would have been happy then, even in her degradation as the king's favourite.

"And you love me still?" she said, half tenderly, half triumphantly.

"Love you, dearest? Love you? See, Catherine, my love personifies itself in deed. Know that from henceforth you are Countess of Dorchester, with all

the rights and advantages that belong to the title. Are you pleased, satisfied? or is there more that I can do that will assure you that you are beloved?"

"Beloved, but not honoured! Oh, why was I not a village maid, and you a deliver of the soil? Or why was I not a queen, and you a low-born peasant, that I might raise you to my throne?"

"Ah, Kate, that is where the shoe pinches, is it? Well, it is too late to make you queen of England, but you are queen of England's king—loved far better than her who owns the name. Seeing that I can do no better, thou must be content, sweetheart."

The honour he intended her was very soothing to her ambition and flattering to her love; but she knew how dangerous would be its acceptance. She refused it, decidedly.

Perhaps the king was not wise enough to weigh the perils this rank would give his favourite. Led away by his mad passion for a woman whose native powers were so superior, and whose courage, affection for himself, and singular intelligence had chained him faster than any merely beautiful woman could have done, he stayed not to think that he had placed her upon a precipice which, though crowned with flowers, held danger, perhaps death, upon its edge. And spite of her denials, he continued to force it upon her acceptance.

Countess of Dorchester she must and should be, and her answer then was silence. He interpreted it as acceptance, and said so.

"On one condition. Promise to grant it, my king, and I will say yes."

"We promise our Countess of Dorchester all she asks of us," was the response.

"Then promise me never to write when you are tempted to give me up, as you were but now, but to come to me and speak it in your own voice. If we must part, give me the mournful satisfaction of a parting hour."

"It shall be so, Catherine; but why talk of parting? In our love calendar there are no such days marked, for which we ought to be deeply thankful. Now farewell, sweet countess."

She saw him shut the door, and then, in an agony of shame, repentance and grief, mingled with jealousy, hate and exultation, she threw herself upon the floor. In that moment, had the means of self-destruction been at hand, she would have taken her own life.

But other hopes and wishes came into her heart. Despite the perils which her good sense told her were involved in her new rank, she was gratified by its bestowal.

It might be a week after this, that the queen sat, attended by a single lady-in-waiting. What a contrast was presented in her face and that of her rival! Eyes, black and lustrous as Catherine's, a complexion like the creamy leaf of the African lily—as purely pale as that unvarnished flower—exquisite hands and arms, and a head perfectly shaped and gracefully set upon the fair, beautiful neck, it could not be denied that Mary of Modena was the Queen of Beauty.

Beautiful, even in her deep sadness. She well knew how the infamous passion of the king had obliterated all love of the queen from his heart; and she had enough of the woman to feel the insult to herself, and enough of the queen to resent it deeply.

Mary had retained one Italian lady about her, who was very dear to her; and who, without descending to be a spy, was interested enough in her royal mistress to give her information of that which it deeply concerned her to know.

It was this very evening that the devoted girl had whispered in the queen's ear what had transpired some days before—namely, the king's offer of making Catherine Sedley countess of Dorchester.

Of course this ennobling of one who had so deeply injured her had sunk into Mary's heart with a weight like lead; and when next she met the king, although she believed herself brave enough to assert her rights, she broke down at the first indignant word, and burst into tears of mingled rage and woe. A stormy scene followed, in which Mary avowed her determination to enter a convent.

"I will not stay here to have my peace destroyed, my sight insulted, by that bad, wicked woman. When I am gone, make her Queen of England if you will. I shall be beyond the reach of knowing or caring if she usurps my place. Let her wear the crown—already she wears the crown of infamy; and infamy and England, I begin to think, are hopelessly united."

Between the two women, the king was at his wits' end—which was not, in truth, far to reach, never having done a wise thing in his life. But there was no healing for the terrible breach between them, unless he would part from Catherine.

At length he promised her that he would give her up; although it was with much dismay that he remembered, a moment afterward, that he had given his word to the newly created countess that when driven to this strait, he would take his farewell in person. How could he keep that promise? He knew well

enough that, if he saw her, he should be unequal to the task of telling her to depart. And this was his farewell!—

"CATHERINE.—They have conquered me at last! I know that I promised to tell you in person, but I cannot. Too well I know that I should again yield to your power. One look from you would subdue and bring me to your feet. Farewell, then, too dearly beloved! Had we never met, we should not have had this bitter, bitter parting."

Catherine had been expecting her royal lover, and was wondering at his unusual delay. Something of prophetic import might have mingled with the sadness which cast a deeper shadow over that unlovely face. The burning eyes were cast down, withdrawing all the light that ever shone there.

"He comes not!" she said, almost wildly, as she started up from her chair and began pacing the room, as was her wont to do when agitated by any strong emotion.

Already she saw, as if by some clairvoyant power, what was coming to her. Her whole frame shivered as with agues, and drops of agony stood upon her brow.

She was not surprised nor startled by hearing a child's soft, pattering, footsteps upon the tessellated floor; nor when the little page knelt before her, with a tiny note in his rosy fingers.

But the passionate and indignant grief that had been welling in her heart burst all bounds when she read the words which to her were like a death-warrant. Curses loud and deep, frightening the little child, who still knelt, as if transfixed to the floor, came up from her heart.

To his terrified cries were added the mournful howlings of the little spaniel, whose proffered caresses she had spurned with a blow such as had never fallen before upon the graceful little animal.

Catherine had a kind heart; and when the burst of passion had had its way, she soothed and caressed her little favourites, winning them both back to loving confidence again.

Yet again and again she broke forth with a stormy grief, like the wail for the dead:

"Oh, heaven, he gives me up—he gives me up for ever!"

The child, unused to such scenes, silently found his way out of the apartment.

The spaniel ran after him, frolicking as if there were no grief in the world, and half-an-hour afterwards, Catherine's attendant found her stretched on the floor, in a long, dismal swoon, that seemed like death itself.

A bright morning shone over England's palaces and cottages.

A richly-painted boat was fastened to the Whitehall stairs, into which a lady, closely veiled, descended, and was instantly rowed toward a yacht, which soon steered for the Irish Channel.

That was the time which the lady's kingly lover had declared was "not in their love calendar;" it was "the parting hour." S. K.

FLOWERS.—Are there any people who entertain a real affection for flowers? If so, then how does it come to pass that flowers at one time the greatest favourites are, after a few years of popularity, no longer looked at; in common parlance, gone out of fashion? Our great nurserymen are the first to find out in which direction the taste is tending; as soon as a plant ceases to be inquired for, they get rid of it at any price, to fill its place with the few favourites of the public; and the effect is, that plants which were seen in every garden, though their price was high, become extremely scarce, and finally disappear altogether from the nurseries. Endeavours are now being made to persuade us that it is but a depraved taste to admire flowers at all; that it is the foliage on which nature has lavished the greatest beauty, and that here real taste has proper objects for gratification. The ferns were the first of this class of plants which gained a footing amongst us. The elegant and graceful tracery of their foliage was so bewitching that a perfect rage for them sprang up, and during the last ten years more books have been written about them than since Botany became a science. The success which the ferns achieved was the greatest triumph of flowerless plants over flowers ever recorded. It was the commencement of a rage for fine foliage plants, as gardeners call them, of that phyllomania now spreading through the length and breadth of Europe. All plants with variegated leaves became much sought after. A species which would not be looked at if preserving the natural green of its foliage, became at once an object of interest if labouring under a kind of albinism so as to make it appear mottled. But white and green was not enough to cause variety; the eye wanted more; and during the last few years the whole of the globe, inhabited and uninhabited, has been searched for plants with leaves having more than two colours,—if possible, all those of the rainbow. The search has been productive be-

yond expectation, and we have now in our caladiums, arums, begonias, marantas, cannas, and others, an endless series of these favourites. The latest development of phyllomania seems to be decidedly towards large and hard-leaved plants; all that are soft and weedy are to be cast aside. Here horticulture has lit upon inexhaustible stores, and amongst them the most majestic of all known plants, the great palm tribe.

THE SCOTS GUARD.

ACCORDING to the old courtly creed of France, the privileges of the Scots Guard had an eminence that partook of sacredness. Twenty-four of them were told off as the special protectors of the royal person. They took charge of the keys of the chamber where the king slept, and the oratory where he paid his devotions. When, on a solemn progress, he entered a walled town, the keys were committed to the custody of the captain of the Guard. They guarded his boat as he crossed a ferry, and were essential to the support of his litter when he was carried. On ordinary occasions two of them stood behind him; but in affairs of great ceremony—the reception of embassies, the conferring high honours, the touching for the king's evil, and the like—six of them stood near the throne, three on either side. It was deemed a marked honour to them that the silk fringe with which their halberds were decorated was white—the royal colour of France.

There is something melancholy beyond description in contemplating the condition of a country, the vast treasures of which had to be confided to the fidelity and bravery of hiring strangers. If there was a fault in the affair, however, it was not with the Scots; they were true to their trust, and paid faith with faith.

On their side of the bargain, too, there is something touching in the picture of a hardy high-spirited man, robbed of their proper field of exertion at home, and driven to a foreign land, there to bestow the enterprising energy that might have made their own illustrious; and serving a foreign master with the single-minded fidelity that had been nourished within them by the love of their own land and kindred. But it must be admitted that their hospitable patrons made their exile mighty comfortable. When the lank youth left behind him the house of his ancestors, standing grey, cold, and bare, on the bleak moorland, it was not to pass into hard sordid exile, but rather to exult in the prospect of a land of promise or Eldorado; and faithfully was the promise kept; for the profuse hospitality and lavish generosity of France to her guests is a thing hardly to be elsewhere paralleled in history. It was but just that it should all be requited with sound fidelity and ardent devotion.—"The Scot Abroad," by John Hill Burton.

DEATH OF A NOBLE BULL-FIGHTER.—Spain now mourns the loss of one of her celebrities, Count Vimioso, who has recently died at Lisbon of an affection of the brain. The count was one of the most expert bull-fighters of the day, and frequently displayed his skill and address when any "representation" was given for a charitable purpose.

HOW AN INDIAN FINDS HIS WAY THROUGH THE WOODS.—H. D. Thoreau, in the account of his excursion through the woods of Maine, tells the following of his Indian guide, Joe Polis:—"I asked him how he guided himself in the woods. 'O,' said he, 'I can tell good many ways.' When I pressed him further, he answered: 'Sometimes I lookum side hill,' and he glanced toward a high hill or mountain on the eastern shore; 'great difference between the north and south; see where the sun has shone most. So trees—the large limbs bend toward south. Sometimes I lookum locks' (rocks). I asked what he saw on the rocks, but he did not describe anything in particular, answering vaguely, in a mysterious or drawing tone, 'Bare locks on lake shore—great difference between N. S. E. W. side—can tell what the sun has shone on.' 'Suppose,' said I, 'that I should take you in a dark night right up here into the middle of the woods, a hundred miles, set you down, and turn you round quickly twenty times, could you steer straight to Old Town?' 'O, yes,' said he; 'have done pretty much the same thing. I will tell you. Some years ago I met an old white hunter at Millinocket; very good hunter. He said he could go anywhere in the woods. He wanted to hunt with me that day, so we start. We chase a moose all the forenoon, round and round, till middle of afternoon, when we kill him. Then I said to him, now you go straight to camp. Don't go round and round where we've been, but go straight. He said I can't do that; I don't know where I am. Where you think camp? I asked. He pointed so. Then I laugh at him. I take the lead and go right off the other way, cross our tracks many times, straight camp. 'How do you do that?' asked I. 'O, I can't tell you,' he replied. 'Great difference between me and white man.'"

THE mania for collecting postage stamps has raged as violently in France as in England, if not more so. It is confidently affirmed that some traders who procured stamps from the English colonies and other distant countries have realised from 4,000*l.* to 6,000*l.*, and that they are still making money. The French have a saying, "Il n'y a pas de sot métier," and this stamp selling proves it. Of itself it seems wondrous silly; but consider the profits to those who carry it on!

THE King of the Belgians, whose health seems for his age to be comparatively excellent, is on a visit to the Emperor Napoleon at Vichy, and it seems to be understood that his journey has some political end. According to one account, his object is to cement the British alliance with France; according to another, he has been requested to give his advice on the succession to the Mexican throne, his son-in-law being childless. As the adviser of the Coburg family, and the only king in Europe since the death of Frederick of Denmark who is sincerely Liberal, the old monarch possesses an influence which Napoleon is precisely the man to feel. It is to be remarked that the demi-official papers of Paris are incessantly talking about the emperor's "perfect health," and that his majesty seems to avoid work very judiciously.

WET PAINT AND CRINOLINES.—In the Sheriff's Court case, *Levy v. Bartlett*, a lady sued for 2*l.* damages, the value of a dress spoiled by wet paint in entering defendant's shop. There were no boards up to protect dresses, but a shopman called out "Beware of the paint" after the dress had touched it, and the lady in turning round at the warning got her dress still more damaged. The defendant maintained that the unusually large crinoline was the cause of the accident; but the sheriff said he could not punish a woman for wearing crinoline: plaintiff could reply that she was entitled to follow the prevailing fashion. If the tradesman wished to protect himself particularly, he ought to put up a notice, "No ladies with large crinolines served in this shop." Verdict for plaintiff, with costs.

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER XLV.

With him went Danger—

Next him was Fear all armed from top to toe,
Yet thought himself not safe enough thereby,
But feared each shadow moving to and fro.

Spenser.

THE insecurity of railway travelling was fully demonstrated in Girling's case.

He was completely at the mercy and in the power of a man, the most charitable interpretation of whose dangerous eccentricity is to say that he was labouring under a severe and aggravated attack of incipient madness; and not only Girling was at the mercy of this individual, but a train full of passengers, who never for a moment suspected the terrible fate which was hanging over them.

The little old man considered Girling effectually disposed of, and continued his self-imposed and murderous task with alacrity.

The tow he had been shredding was torn up in a heap of considerable size, and was placed upon a seat in the neighbourhood of the window, where the rush of air would be likely to seize it, and fan it, when alight, into a furious flame.

Just as he had drawn a box of matches from his pocket for the purpose of beginning the conflagration he so fondly contemplated, the train entered a tunnel. No sooner had the funeral shadow enveloped them, than a singular reverberating noise, like continuous volleys of musketry, was heard. This sound always arises in a tunnel when a train is going at speed. It is the echo of the thundering crank and the grinding steel.

With a demoniacal smile, or rather grin, the Slomakin applied a lighted match to the tow, which caught fire on the instant, and began to burn with frightful rapidity.

At this crisis Girling returned to consciousness, but the fierce glare nearly blinded him. He shut his eyes again, and resigned himself to what seemed his inevitable doom.

It seemed to him that nothing could save him. He was too much bruised and hurt to jump to his feet and renew the contest. All he was able to do was to mutely protest against the insane outrage on life and property which his erratic fellow passenger was bent on committing.

He was firmly persuaded that the Slomakin was mad, because no man in his senses would condemn himself to a horrible, painful, and lingering death. To have consigned others to so terrible a fate would have been intelligible; but to suffer the pains of death

and the miseries of martyrdom one's self, for the sake of an idea, was so palpably the act of a maniac, that Girling began to wonder how it came that the little old man was allowed to be at large.

It was a melancholy moment for Girling, as he lay upon the hard boards of that second-class carriage on the London and North-Western Railway, travelling at express speed towards Kirkdale, fired with ambitious designs, and hoping to humble once more the haughty pride of the wicked—but charming—Lady Brandon. He could not forget that he had once loved her, and his passion had not entirely evaporated during his long and tedious illness. He had pressed it deep down into his heart, and confined it there; but the superincumbent weight could not altogether smother the sparks of love which still smouldered.

Who shall say how far his resuscitated ambition was about to lead him, or what wild fantastic notions were already climbing like parasitical creepers around the tendrils of his heart?

But now—everything—his ambition, his hope, his pride, his expectation of the future, were all to be extinguished at one swoop by the act of a madman. In all probability, in ten minutes' time, all that would be left of him would be a few charred bones and smoking cinders.

He blamed himself for his foolish precipitancy in so eagerly embracing the offer of two pounds made him by the Slomakin. He ought to have known that the very fact of a loan being proffered in that strange way was sufficiently suspicious to have justified him in at once rejecting it. He wished devoutly that he had done so—for it was cruel to rise from a long-protracted illness, only to be burned alive in a railway carriage. Better—far better—have died in his bed, or have perished in the river Thames during his feverish swim from bank to bank, or have succumbed in the hospital through the effects of the shot received in his struggle with Sir Lawrence Allingford.

The tow burned, as tow always does burn, fiercely and quickly. The sides of the compartment had caught the flames, and were already alight. The wood cracked, and the paint rose up in huge blisters on the roof.

Suddenly Girling sat up on his elbow and held his breath.

Was he mistaken, or was there a sensible decrease in the motion of the train. He had not prayed to heaven for many long years, but now he opened those lips, unused to the passage of a prayer, and poured out his soul in supplication, with the meek earnestness of a little child animated by that pure faith which has a motive-power over mountains. When he considered his death certain, he did not care to pray for the averting of what he looked upon as inevitable; but now that there was a prospect of salvation, he endeavoured to accelerate and bring about the wished-for result by all the means in his power.

The Slomakin did not appear to notice the decrease in the rate at which the train was progressing, but to Girling it was more and more perceptible every instant.

A grating sound fell upon his ears; he placed his head on a level with the flooring of the carriage, so that he might ascertain the cause more easily.

He started up with a cry of joy. There was no doubt about it now.

The breaks were down. For some reason or other, best known to himself, the guard was about to stop the train.

Let the wood grate and grind against the swiftly revolving wheel. Let the steam be shut off, and the engine reversed, for there is no time to be lost. In another five minutes many lives will be sacrificed, and the injury will be irreparable.

Still in the dingy, smoky, black—awfully black, and dismal tunnel.

Ah! a ray of light slants along the damp-laden wall, followed by another and another, until the whole flood of welcome light gushes into the sombre precincts through which the train is travelling. No forty miles an hour now though—hardly ten—hardly five. It will soon come to the standstill. More than one anxious head is obtruded from the windows to ascertain the cause of the unexpected stoppage. Pater Familias, aroused by the slackening of the train, wakes up, and rubbing his eyes, exclaims:

"What, Rugby already. Good travelling, sir, certainly!"

"I hope it isn't an accident," timidly remarks Mrs. Mildmay, a lady patroness in Leamington.

"Dear me! what can it be?" cries Lady Snuffkins to little Miss Toddy, the nursery governess, and little Miss Toddy respectfully replies that she cannot venture to offer an opinion, and gets snubbed for her pains, a process of social extinction to which she is getting used.

"Decided case of break-down, sir," observes Mr. Loom, a commercial traveller in the dry goods line, to his travelling companion, Mr. Cotton, who is "on commission" for Brindley and Bagg, of London and

Manchester, who replies that he is also of opinion that it is "a case." He looks as if he was not quite sure whether it is not a "decided case;" but on consideration, he determines not to further support the declaration of his friend, who takes off his hat, and looks out of the window.

The Slomakin now discovers that the motion of the train is rapidly decreasing; he casts a scathing look at William Girling, as if he thought him mysteriously connected in some way with the stoppage. The fire does not burn so fiercely, because there is little or no wind to fan it, but still it burns steadily, and has seized upon the roof of the carriage, where it is pursuing its devastations in an alarming manner. The little old man had, by his thoughtlessness, destroyed all chance of succeeding in his novel and devilish plan. It had never entered his calculations, that if he lighted the tow in a tunnel, the blaze arising from its consumption would be thrown on the walls. But it was so, and it was this shadow which had caught the guard's attention. He had been looking out of the window of his break van, and to his surprise he perceived a red and ruddy glare, which lit up the train and the tunnel. He knew that it could arise from no proper or regular state of things, and it at once occurred to him that some carriage had accidentally caught fire. Instantly communicating with the driver of the engine, he signalled him to stop, and put down his breaks with all the alacrity of which he was capable, but to stay the rushing progress of an engine drawing a train at an express rate is no easy matter. It is a work of time, and so it happened that the train emerged from the tunnel before it could be brought to a standstill. Had the Slomakin acted with a little more discretion he might have succeeded in his iniquitous design. If he had merely been suffering from an obliquity of moral purpose, he would have thought of the risk of detection he ran, through an illumination in a tunnel; but like most men whose minds are diseased, he made an error in his calculation. He left behind him the link which alone could complete the chain, and the consequence was, that with all his industry and his cunning, he found his efforts frustrated.

With a jerk and a groan, the train pulled up, and all was excitement and confusion. The engine, with a hissing noise, began to let off steam, and creaked and sighed after the manner of iron horses when at a standstill. The guard was the first to alight, and he passed quickly down the line to ascertain the cause of the fire which had occasioned him to order the stoppage of the train. He stopped opposite Girling's carriage, and opened the door against which he was lying. Without a moment's delay he dragged him out, and laid him upon the bank. The Slomakin, seeing that his scheme was frustrated, and that he stood no chance of immortalizing himself during that journey, jumped from the carriage, ran past the guard, and dashed down the embankment. Girling, perceiving this adroit movement on his part, wishing to assist in the rascal's capture, and desirous of exculpating himself in the eyes of the officials, exclaimed, in a loud tone:

"That is the miscreant! After him, after him!"

Two or three passengers, who had followed the guard's example in speedily alighting, commenced the pursuit. The guard could not join them, as it was highly important that he should at once extinguish the flames.

Having gained the bottom of the embankment, the Slomakin turned round, glared angrily at those following him, shook his fist at William Girling, and, after muttering some incoherent and unintelligible phrases, started off at a swift pace across the country. The stoker of the engine had joined the pursuers, whose number amounted to seven in all. Bending his head and setting his elbows well into his sides, the Slomakin made an excellent race, and those behind him saw that if he could "stay," their chance of overtaking him was but small. Not a word was spoken; but all were straining every nerve and every sinew. The stoker headed the pursuing party, but the rapidity with which the Slomakin ran, excited the admiration of all. Nearly everyone in the train had alighted, and formed into little groups on the side of the line, from whence they watched the race with great interest.

Some of the passengers were sitting down—some grouped round the burning carriage, which the guard and the engine driver were endeavouring to rescue from its impending danger. They had borrowed a couple of railway rugs, and dipping them in water obtained from the engine, threw them upon the flames, which were soon, by these means, partially got under, and rendered less formidable. There was every prospect of the fire being extinguished before the Slomakin was captured.

The latter individual had, contrary to the expectations of his pursuers, shown some symptoms of fatigue, or, at all events, he had slackened his pace,

whether as a *ruce* or not it was impossible to say. At a moment when they least expected it—and after he had allowed them to come within a few yards of him—he made a short circuit and doubled upon them, leading back again for the line, only the point he made for was about a quarter of a mile above the place where the train was standing.

The excitement now became intense, and no one doubted for a moment that he would soon be captured. He did not fatigue himself by any great rapidity in his mode of progression; he contented himself with keeping his enemies a certain distance in his rear; but when he reached the embankment again, he scrambled up it with the agility of a wild cat, and before any one could divine his intention, he ran quickly down the line, and jumped upon the engine, with the mode of working which he seemed to be tolerably familiar, for he at once turned the steam on, and, to the consternation of every one, the train began to move as the wheels of the engine slowly revolved, but his triumph was short-lived. He had forgotten that the breaks were down, and that there were a dozen men ready to spring at him, and dislodge him from the place where he had gained an advantage as temporary as it was important. The stoker jumped upon a step and mounted the engine before it had gone far, and felled him to the ground. He rolled over the side of the engine, his coat being caught by the wheels, and he was remorselessly dragged under, before the slightest assistance could be rendered to him. In this terrible emergency he uttered the most piteous cries, but they soon ceased, and when the body of the *Slomakin* was once more exposed to view, he was a shockingly mangled and mutilated corpse.

A sigh and a shudder were the only tributes paid to his memory, and *Girling*, who had recovered from his hurts by the application of a little brandy, taken internally, was besieged by eager questioners, who wished to be enlightened on various points connected with his perilous journey.

He was the hero of the hour.

He answered all the questions that were put to him disingenuously and to the best of his ability. The only fiction he was guilty of inventing was that he was going down to *Kirkdale* to see his mother, who was dying; by which story he so excited the sympathy of his fellow passengers that they "sent the hat round for him," and collected the sum of seven pounds, ten shillings, and sixpence for him on the spot, which he placed in his pocket with appropriate expressions of gratitude, and once more took his place in the train, with the air of a capitalist, and surrounded by a little knot of his ardent admirers.

If he had been a converted cannibal, eating baked meats or boiled mutton and caper-sauce for the first time, he could not have excited more genuine attention than he did.

The guard pulled up the windows, and told the passengers to take their seats once more.

William Girling never knew who the *Slomakin* was nor whence he came, and he always looked upon his brief acquaintance with him as one of those mysterious chapters in men's lives which are best not dwelt upon, as they only serve to bewilder and confuse one.

Once more the steam was got up, and the train rolled along towards its destination, arriving at *Rugby* five-and-twenty minutes behind the time set down in the time-tables.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The night is chill—the forest bare,
Is it the wind that mouneth bleak?

Coleridge.

Were the volume of a minute
Thus to mortal sight unrolled,
More of sin and sorrow in it,
More of man might we behold.

James Montgomery.

BYRON called Malta a little military hothouse, and he might, with great truth and justice, have applied the same epithet to *Gibraltar*. It is very sterile, very hot, and very rocky. No cool breezes blow off the land. The hatred of the Spaniards seems to turn into a sort of fiery sirocco, which is breathed forth by them for the purpose of scorching up the detested English.

It was here that *Reginald Welby* stayed a short time with his young wife. It chanced that some old schoolfellows of his, who had also been up at *Oxford* with him, were in a regiment which was under orders for foreign service, and doing duty on the rock preparatory to undertaking a voyage to *Bengal*, where they would probably be sent to some frontier station to keep the mutinous natives in order, and govern the *Pandies* by the sword.

There were balls and parties and dinners at *Gibraltar*, and the officers of the garrison were very kind to *Welby*, and made themselves peculiarly agreeable to *Blanche*, which is an accomplishment that gentle-

men holding commissions in her Majesty's service, at home and abroad, are famous for; and, in spite of the heat, both the husband and wife found themselves so comfortable that they were unwilling to leave the place so soon as they had intended.

Reginald's love for his young wife took the form of an intense passion. He idolized her, he adored her, he did all but worship her, and that he refrained from doing because his religion forbade him to do so. His love was so intense that he sometimes grew alarmed at its strength and force, which, instead of abating, appeared to grow stronger and stronger day by day. He knew that it was wrong to make an idol of anything; yet, if ever a pretty woman was idolized, *Blanche* was.

If she went out for a walk without him, *Reginald* fretted for her until she returned with childish impatience. Nothing gave him such supreme and ineffable delight as waiting upon her. He would not allow her to do a single thing for herself, and he was continually buying things in the town which he thought in the fullness of his love might please her. She was overwhelmed with presents; and he was so devotedly attached to her, that everyone remarked it, and made it the subject of conversation when the tongue was loosened by generous wine and a genial sun beaming in a kindly sky.

Reginald was a young man, and a very impressionable one. He was possessed of fine qualities, and a strength of purpose which would make him dare and do anything. He was one of those men who, had he not married, would have fallen into a semi-monastic sort of life. He wanted some grand absorbing passion to centre his whole soul upon, and he found it in his love for *Lady Brandon*. Had it not been for her he would most probably have become ascetic. He believed in an active religion, not a passive one, and his spirit was so deeply devotional, that had not the current of his thoughts been turned, he might have turned missionary and gone out to *El Zeb* or some place in *Arabia Petrea*, to convert the wandering tribes of that little known region.

And *Blanche*. What shall I say of her? Did she too love with the all-engrossing love of her husband? Were all her senses steeped in the amorous lake in the waters of which he revelled? I cannot say that they were; but she was happy and contented. She felt that she had achieved a rest which she had been sighing and longing for for some time past. Whether it was to be brief and fleeting or of long duration was another thing. It might be the calm before the coming storm. She did not trouble herself much about that; the great fact was that she had achieved it, and, with her usual egotism, she determined to make the most of it. She treated her husband with what I can only describe as a species of affectionate condescension. She took all his love as a matter of course—as something pleasant and agreeable, to which she was fully entitled; but the idea of thanking him for it never entered her head; she never dreamed of such a thing. But on the other hand, if she lavished a few caresses upon him, she expected him to be deeply grateful for her kindness. He was prodigal in his caresses, but she was chary—so chary in the bestowal of hers. Her nature was not cold. She was not an animated iceberg—a thing without a heart, far from it; but her affections had been trodden upon and blighted. She was strong-minded and revengeful, and although she had sworn that she would never—never speak in kindly tones to *Sir Lawrence Allingford* again, she could not resist the temptation of thinking of him sometimes.

He had been her first love. He had made himself a home in the chambers of her heart; and although she had succeeded in dislodging him therefrom, she could not place any other—even though that other candidate for so great a happiness was her lawful husband—in so sacred a position. *Blanche's* heart was not dead, but she had shut its gates and closely barred them. *Reginald* might in time be able to force his way inside, but there was the probability of his spending a lifetime in ineffectual attempts. He was blind to her apathy. He did not wish her to be so loving to him as he was to her. He was satisfied and content with the slightest acknowledgment of his devotion, and he looked forward to that dear time when he could call her a mother to bind them more closely together.

Would it do so? Would it have that magical effect? That remained to be seen. He had been married to this lovely syren for some weeks, and he had never once attempted to exercise any authority over her. She had sworn to obey him, and it is a recognised duty of wives to obey their husbands in all things, if the discipline they set up is not excessive or tyrannical; but he was too fond of her to think of thwarting her slightest or most trivial wish.

He had been out for a walk one day, and returned to the hotel at which they were stopping with a small marmoset monkey in his arms. He had bought it for *Blanche*, because he thought she might like it. The little thing had a collar round its neck, to which a long silver chain was attached.

Lady Brandon was reclining in an arm-chair, reading a small, three-cornered, pink, scented note; and she fanned herself occasionally, to keep away the flies, with an ivory handled fan—one of his latest gifts. She looked up as he entered, and catching sight of the monkey, said:

"What have you brought with you now?"

"A monkey, dear; quite a pet, the man told me."

"Never mind what the man told you," replied *Lady Brandon*, with asperity; "take it away again. There is nothing I detest so much as a monkey."

"I thought you would like it," he said, looking crestfallen at the rejection of his present, and feeling annoyed at the despotic tone in which she spoke.

Without paying him any further attention, *Lady Blanche* went on with her note.

Reginald was a little irritated at her treatment of him, but he loved her too much to worry her or to annoy her. He did not think he was doing a foolish thing by petting and spoiling her as he was in the habit of doing at least fifty times every day of his life; but he was destined to find out his mistake some day.

Ring the bell, he told the servant who appeared to take the monkey down-stairs and have it attended to. The fellow, who was a Greek, bowed, and taking the animal under his arm, retired.

Reginald walked to the fire-place, and placing his back against it, looked at his wife. Up to the present time she had been tolerably good-tempered; no disagreement had disturbed the even tenor of their matrimonial existence, although, had it not been for *Reginald's* timely submission, there would have been more than one serious disturbance; for *Lady Brandon* looked upon her husband as a silly boy, of whom she had made use to escape from her enemies. Just the least suspicion of gratitude to him lurked about her heart occasionally, but it soon passed away. This was in her tender moments, and who amongst us can say that they are without those precious fragments of time when the heart is capable of receiving only good impressions. The business man owns them, and the wicked man confesses them. In the case of the latter this is when the seeds of remorse and reformation are sown. She felt a sense of peace and quietness, and an absence of that horrible sensation which made her turn her head over her shoulders at least a dozen times a day at *Kirkdale* with a nervous dread that *William Girling*, or *Sir Lawrence Allingford*, was gazing at her through the framework of some oriel window, or out of some famous picture by an old master which adorned the walls, behind her back.

"Who is your correspondent, *Blanche*?" exclaimed *Reginald*, not from a vulgar motive of curiosity, but because he wished to open the portals of conversation once more.

"I really do not see how that can interest you," she replied, a little rudely.

"It does not interest me much. It was only a simple question, which I thought you might answer without inconvenience to yourself."

He spoke sadly, for he felt hurt at her harsh response.

"It does inconvenience me."

"But why should it?" he said, plucking up a little courage.

"Pray don't bother me by asking stupid questions."

"I must bother you, *Blanche*," he replied, seriously, "if you choose to be bothered by such a trifle."

She gave him no answer.

"It must be an engrossing letter," he continued, "or it would not absorb your attention as much as it does."

"Perhaps it is," was the unconcerned reply.

"You have had time enough to read it over twice since I have been in the room."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I do."

"You are perfectly welcome to your opinion, I'm sure," said *Lady Brandon*, as calmly as before.

"*Blanche!*" he said, reprovingly.

"Well."

"I should like to see the letter you are reading."

"I am sorry for it."

"Why?" said *Reginald*, a little nervously.

"Because I do not choose that you should see it."

"Is it a secret, then?"

"Not at all."

"Why may I not see it?"

"I have told you."

"But you have not given me a satisfactory reason."

"It is the only one I can give you," she replied, fanning the flies away energetically.

"Why do you treat me like this, dear *Blanche*?" he exclaimed, appealing to her affections, which showed a lamentable ignorance of character on his part.

"Go down-stairs and take the monkey back to the place you bought it at, and see what the man will buy it back again for?" exclaimed *Lady Brandon*, without looking at him.

"Have I done anything to deserve unkindness from you?" he continued, without taking any notice of her remark.

"You deserve it now, because you are teasing me," she said, forced to reply.

"Does my presence tease you?"

"Yes, it does."

In this crisis of his married life, Reginald Welby acted with more decision than Lady Blanche expected from him. He walked across the room until he stood close to her. The window near him was open, and standing up as he was, he could see the people with their sombreros hats going backwards and forwards, and the cries of the water-carriers and the careless laugh of the British soldier were distinctly borne towards him. He looked at Lady Blanche, and she returned his gaze with what appeared to be a sort of defiance, which said plainly enough,

"I look very lamb-like and innocent, but if you attack me I will soon show my teeth."

Reginald accepted the challenge, and did attack her.

"Blanche," he exclaimed, "I insist upon seeing that letter."

"What!" she cried, as if she could scarcely believe the evidence of her senses.

"I insist upon seeing that letter," he repeated, with distinct and slow articulation.

"You insist!"

"Yes," he said firmly.

A light laugh rang through the room, and Lady Brandon exclaimed:

"Your insistence will be like the famous veto of Louis the Sixteenth, of very little use to you, I am afraid."

"You will not venture to disobey me, Blanche?"

"I certainly shall not show you the letter."

"That is disobedience in its plainest form."

"You may call it what you like; I am not going to be domineered over by you, simply because you are my husband."

Lady Brandon felt that it was a conflict for mastery, and she was determined to battle to the last, so that she might win the fight, and set the question at rest for ever.

"I do not wish to domineer over you, Blanche; you should not say so. Do I not give way to you in everything?"

"It does not look like it."

"I complain," continued Reginald, "of your having any secrets from me."

"Why should you see my letters?"

"I only ask you if it is from."

"And I do not choose to tell you," she replied, obstinately.

What was he to do? He could not go up to her and say that she should give him the letter, and if she again refused take it from her by force of arms. He would never have forgiven himself for using violence to his wife. Strange to say he was not jealous at her refusal to let him see the letter which was the fatal cause of the disagreement between them. Jealousy never entered his mind. He flattered himself that his wife would never give him any cause for jealousy.

Some people will call Reginald's milk-and-waterish for the course he adopted in the emergency in which he was placed; but he was certain that although it was slightly humiliating to his manly dignity, it was the surest way in the end to win back his wife's love and confidence. With a sweet and submissive expression of countenance he sat down at Blanche's feet, and taking her hand in his, covered it with kisses.

She snatched it away abruptly.

"You scold me one minute, and pet me the next," she said.

"I did not mean to scold you."

"Why do you do what you do not mean?" she asked.

"If I have offended you, you must forgive me."

"You do not deserve to be forgiven all at once."

"Do I not?"

"If I say I forgive you, I shall never hear the last of the letter, I am sure."

He looked up at her with his eyes brimfull of love. He was so passionately attached to her that he was content—thoroughly content to forget his duty as a husband, to sacrifice anything and everything for her.

But he had not been married six weeks!

"Do you want to see it?" she asked, holding the letter over his head.

"No, my darling," he replied, letting his head fall upon her lap.

"You do not?"

"No."

A smile of triumph flitted over her countenance. Her victory was complete. Reginald had struggled for the mastery, and had been defeated, and he was more her slave than ever; more satisfied than before to defer to her judgment, and bow to her will. He was beaten—disgracefully beaten in the conflict he

had sought, and Blanche's heart swelled with satisfaction as she saw that with him in future her will would be omnipotent. It was her supreme desire to make it so. She knew that with a man like Reginald the only way to obtain a sure hold over his affections is to govern him with a high hand. Such men would rather be in bondage to their wives, than hold their wives subservient to them. Lady Brandon's great object was to make herself so indispensable to Reginald that he could not do without her. It has been already stated that she was essentially prescriptive, and she always considered it more than probable that her evil genius, William Girling, would some day re-appear and jeopardize her happiness. Consequently, it was essential that she should have Welby under her control, and to such an extent that he would trust and believe her before all the world.

"If you will always trust me like this, Reginald, I will never conceal anything from you."

"I will never question you again."

"Never?"

"No. I promise."

"I am very proud, dear," she added, "and I must have implicit confidence placed in me. If you mistrust me, I would rather allow you to labour under a mistake than enlighten you and put you right."

"Believe me, I acted in ignorance of all this."

"I am willing to think so, and to prove that I have forgiven you, here is the letter you were so anxious to know all about."

"I do not want to see it now, dearest," he replied.

"You do trust me, then?"

"Implicitly," said Reginald.

"Then, as a reward for your being good, take the letter. I should like you to read it."

She talked to him as if he were a little boy. He took the note and read it.

"From O'Shaughnessy!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. He writes, as you see, to know if we will go to a picnic, or something of that sort, in Africa. I suppose that land we can see on the other side of the strait is Africa, is it not?"

"Certainly. Have you so soon forgotten your geography?"

"Married women may forget anything; and it is a social duty with them to forget music, or else they interfere with the opportunities for display which of right belong to the single ladies."

"You think that those who are married can afford to be generous?"

"I say they do wrong if they are not. What answer shall we send to the gallant captain?"

O'Shaughnessy was captain in a foot regiment quartered at the Rock, and a distant relative, he said, of the Brandon's. Whether he was or not, was a question Blanche did not care to dispute. She found his society and chaperonage agreeable in an out-of-the-way place like Gibraltar; but although she treated him with affability, she allowed no undue familiarity on the score of relationship. He called himself a "cousin" of hers, and cousins sometimes think themselves privileged to say anything they like.

O'Shaughnessy had once asked her to come to a garrison ball without Reginald, who was ill, but she resolutely refused.

"Is it possible that you care for that boy?" he said, contemptuously.

Lady Brandon's face grew red with passion, and she replied, indignantly:

"I value one hair of that boy's head more than I do the lives of every man in this fortress!"

"Excuse me," he stammered; "but—"

"No, I will not excuse you. You have wounded me deeply. Never speak to me again."

"At least, be reasonable."

"Please go away from me. I wish to have nothing more to say to you."

O'Shaughnessy thought the best thing he could do was to gather up his garments and flee, and remembering the pillar of salt, not to look behind him; but he made one more attempt to conciliate the angry Lady Brandon.

"If I may not speak, may I write to you?" he said, in a penitent tone.

"That depends upon circumstances."

With this she swept grandly past him, and the captain thought it prudent never to allude to "that boy" again in disparaging terms.

Lady Brandon did not take Reginald's part so much because she really did care for him. But, as her husband, she regarded him as part and parcel of herself, and anything insulting uttered against him she felt recoiled upon her in a limited degree, and she resented it accordingly.

O'Shaughnessy had allowed some days to elapse, and seeing Welby about the town, he concluded that he was better, so the letter Lady Blanche had received was the one he had asked permission to write, and which she had told him might be written under certain circumstances.

It was carefully, formally, and almost stiffly written. There was nothing in it that Reginald could take offence at, even if he had been the most fastidious Bluebeard of modern times.

After thinking a short time, Reginald said in a honeyed voice, which was like the cooing of a turtle dove:

"Would you like to go, dearest?"

"Well, yes; I think I should."

"Write, then, by all means, and say we shall be happy to go."

Blanche rose, and sitting down at a writing-table, took up a pen, saying:

"What a comfort it must be to lazy men like you, Reginald, to have an industrious wife."

"Am I lazy?"

"Are you? Ask yourself."

"Why am I lazy? Tell me one instance," he said, with a smile.

"In not writing this very letter which I am going to indite. Fancy making your wife accept and refuse invitations."

"But the man wrote to you."

"That doesn't matter. Now, do go away. I never can write while any one is fidgeting about me;—and get me a little dictionary—the one I generally use. It is as well to be exact in one's spelling when writing to the army."

"Make me your dictionary," exclaimed Reginald.

"I will, if you sit down and keep quiet; but not without."

Reginald instantly sat down in a chair near his wife, and remained mute as a mouse.

Blanche began to write. The pen went slowly over the paper, and she seemed to be making creditable progress. Suddenly she came to a stop.

"Broke down?" inquired Reginald.

"Why, yes," she replied, looking up in a puzzled manner.

"What is it?"

"How do you spell 'Sesostris'?"

"What are you writing about?" he said, in some surprise.

"Curious again!" she cried, rebukingly; "but as you have been good, I don't mind telling you. I have been out once or twice on a mule they call Sesostris; and as I don't care about walking about on the burning sand beneath the scorching sun, I am just telling Captain O'Shaughnessy that I will accept his invitation to the picnic of the officers of the—, provided they take the mule over the straits."

"Oh, I see! Spell it with one s in each syllable."

"One!" exclaimed Lady Brandon; "not two in the second syllable?"

"No," he replied.

The letter was soon written, and Reginald himself volunteered to take it up to the barracks.

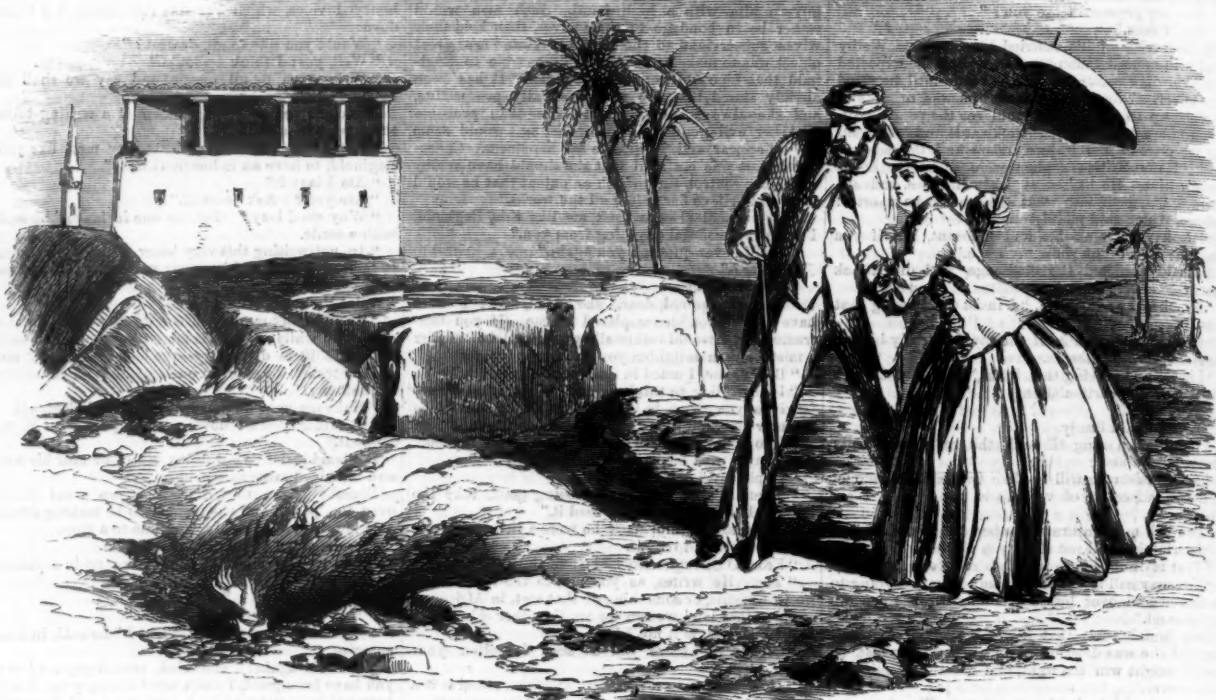
Blanche made no objection to this proceeding on his part, and went up-stairs to see what she should wear when the eventual day arrived. She had been told that there were the remains of an old city half-buried in the sand, not far from the shore; and as she was fond of the antique, she looked forward to a pleasant excursion.

When she had first heard of the buried cities of the plain, and all the departed glory of a vast civilization which had gone away for ever, and left but a meagre trace behind it, her heart had throbbed with a strange wonder, and she had fallen into many a dreamy reverie, from which Reginald had found it difficult to awaken her, and from the past her thoughts went by natural and easy transitions to the present and the future. The present was a congeries of miracles in comparison with everything which had preceded it; but according to the laws of nature, all the magnificence of the west must pale—must decay—must vanish and give place to something else, perhaps more colossal, probably more stupendous. She dared not think of the future. Why, her own puny, insignificant future frightened her; how then could she contemplate the future of a world? She shrank from dragging aside the veil which shrouded what was to be. Once in a sceptical and half-jocular manner she had striven to do so; but the astrologer whom she had consulted, and whom she had set down as a quack, had told her that she had but ten years to live.

Ten years! The time was short enough, and one of the given years had nearly run its course.

The day appointed for the excursion arrived, and the party, consisting of several officers and their wives, including some subalterns, with a colonel and a general officer, crossed the straits at the entrance of the Mediterranean in two boats, with large lateen sails. Lady Brandon was in high spirits, and did not even speak angrily to O'Shaughnessy, who was making outrageous attempts to flirt with her.

Acting upon her hint, several mules had been hired for the accommodation of the ladies, and they were carried over in a boat by themselves. Several of the gentlemen of the party had taken their rides with them, O'Shaughnessy amongst the number.



[REGINALD'S STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.]

"I wish I could see an ibis and shoot it," he said.
 "Why! the Egyptians worship, or used to worship the ibis. Besides, there are no ibises now; you are only making fun of us," replied Lady Brandon.

"Oh! I don't know. There might be a stray bird here and there. Perhaps they hunted them too closely and made them wild, causing them to go further into the interior."

"He is incorrigible," remarked a lady to Blanche.
 "Indeed! I am afraid he is."

"There is something for you to shoot at," cried Lady Brandon, pointing to a magnificent golden eagle, soaring along, in a stately manner, high above their heads.

"Too high! Too far off!" exclaimed more than one voice, but O'Shaughnessy raised his rifle to his shoulder, and took a steady aim. He fired, but his bullet either whistled harmlessly by it, or did not come up to it, for it continued its course without losing a feather.

"Oh! I am so glad you missed it," exclaimed Blanche.

"That is unkind of you," replied the captain, a little chagrined at his ill-success.

"Not in the least. I think it cruel to kill anything without it is absolutely necessary that you should do so for culinary purposes."

When the boat reached the shore the sun was sending down to the earth its perpendicular rays; but as the ladies were well provided with spacious umbrellas, and not burdened by a superfluity of clothing, they did not suffer much inconvenience. Every one felt a strange and undefinable sensation at being on the shore of Africa, made famous by the Egyptian Pharaohs, the children of Israel, who settled in the land of Goshen, and made the passage of the Red Sea; by the luxurious Cleopatra, by its vagueness, its unknown wastes, and its remoteness. Lady Brandon called it the Mystic land, of which only the shore was filled with a sparse population. In order to reach the ruins, where they were going to dine, the party had to undergo a long march over a dusty, sandy plain, where not a tree was to be seen; nothing lay before them but a long, trackless, pathless, waste of red shining sand, which, if you took it up, burned and blistered your hands. The guides seemed to know the way well; but the caravan, as it may be called, had to halt more than once while the thirsty travellers paid a passing tribute to the virtues of Bass or Allsop.

Those who have been to the British Museum, and have seen in those long, mouldy-looking galleries the broken plinths, and snapped columns, and ruined

arches, and shapeless blocks of stone, will get some idea of the half-buried city the little party from the garrison of Gibraltar went out to see. Huge irregular masses of some substance resembling granite protruded from the sand. The city, in days gone by, might have been a mighty one, walled round and fenced; but now, alas! how desolate it was!

Some monoliths, forming a picturesque group, arrested the travellers' attention. It was conjectured that they were intended to mark the graves of some distinguished citizens. Strange unknown characters were inscribed upon them, which were unintelligible to all the party, including the guides, who had never heard of their being interpreted. A few palm-trees rose up, gaunt and melancholy, here and there, with their bare stems and spreading tops. In some places the vegetation was rank and luxuriant; but that was owing to the tiny springs that had their rise in their midst, soon after losing themselves in the sandy waste.

The great attraction of the city, which was so ancient as to be without a name (how striking a commentary on human ambition and greatness!), was a small kiosk or temple. It had been of great size, but many of its galleries and chambers were in ruins and choked up with the sand. Under the dome in the central hall of this place, it was customary for those who made pilgrimages to it to dine. Here it was cool and shady. In such a region it was ridiculous to talk about a beautiful view of the country or a charming landscape, for there was no such thing. It was not so interesting as looking at the sea to look at that desert of sand, because on the sea you perceive ships; on the desert you do not distinguish even a camel.

"I should like to die here," said Lady Brandon to Captain O'Shaughnessy, who was standing near her husband.

"Die!" they both repeated.

"Yes. To my mind there is something grand in the idea of dying in a place like this, and being buried in the subterranean vaults of that old temple, which is probably a mummy house."

"You should be an antiquary," remarked Reginald.

"So I am in taste and feeling," she replied.

"Give me the thing that's pretty, young, and new, All ugly, ancient things I'll leave to you," sang the captain, with a smile.

"I should be perfectly content with that arrangement," replied Lady Brandon. "Give me the Pyramids, and you shall have the sheds at Kensington called museums. Give me St. Peter's at Rome, St. Mark's at Venice, the cathedrals at Cologne, at Genoa

and Milan, and you shall have our modern churches. Give me—"

"Pray stop, Lady Brandon! Do not overwhelm me!" said the captain, holding up his hand deprecatingly.

"You should not be so rash as to provoke comparisons."

While dinner was being got ready, Reginald went round the Temple, making investigations. He clambered over one block of ruins, and poked his stick at another, and killed a couple of shining, glittering lizards, much to the amusement of the captain and Lady Brandon, who watched his movements with some curiosity.

All at once he gave a wild, startled cry, and disappeared from view.

"Good gracious!" cried Lady Brandon, "what can have become of him?"

The cry, which was prolonged and piercing, brought every one to the spot.

O'Shaughnessy ran forward with Lady Brandon, and found that Reginald had disappeared down a circular fissure, the depth of which it was impossible to estimate without a light.

It must have been half choked up with sand, so that he had not perceived it.

"For heaven's sake," exclaimed Blanche, "do something for him! He may be stifled in that fetid vault, which has, in all likelihood, not echoed to a human footstep for ages."

The tears stood in her eyes, and she was greatly excited.

"What's to be done?" cried the captain.

"Ask the guides," replied some one.

The guides were called, but they all declared that they never knew of the existence of such a cavern as the one which was pointed out to them as the one through which Reginald Welby had disappeared.

"Procure lights!" exclaimed Captain O'Shaughnessy, in an authoritative voice, "and let ropes be brought. If no one will volunteer to save Welby, myself will see what can be done."

Lady Brandon cast a grateful look upon the captain, whose bravery in an arduous and trying moment raised him very much in her estimation.

In the meantime the guides went away to make preparations for a descent into the cavity.

The greatest excitement prevailed amongst the party from the caravan, and as every one talked at once, a small Babel was created.

Not a sound emanated from the fissure to indicate whether Reginald Welby was dead or alive.

(To be continued.)



[CARRIE'S SORROW.]

THE FATAL SECRET.

CHAPTER XXI

While through the rugged path of life we go,
All mortals taste the bitter cup of woe!

Falconer.

In compliance with her promise to Somerton, Fanny Berkeley came over to Fountains to visit Savella. She was surprised to see Senora Roselli come down with her and remain near enough to hear all that passed between them, until Savella impatiently said:

"Aunt Bianca, you need not remain as a spy on Fanny and me; we are not going to plot treason against your authority, for she is too much in awe of my uncle to do anything of which he would disapprove."

The senora severely replied:

"It will be a welcome release for me to leave you a few moments in safe companionship; but if I can trust Miss Berkeley I cannot place the same confidence in you. Since you object to my presence, I will retire where I can keep you in sight, which will suffice while she is with you."

Fanny looked in a bewildered manner from one speaker to the other, and when the elder lady swept out of the room she rapidly asked:

"What can this mean, Savella? Are you actually under surveillance?"

"You may well say that, Fanny. I am watched night and day, and what do you suppose it is for?"

"You have not planned an elopement already, Savella? You can know no one well enough as yet to place such confidence as that in his hands."

"There you are mistaken, my dear. I fancy I know my lover as well as I shall ever know him, for his beautiful soul is imaged in the perfection of his person. My uncle is absurd enough to object to him, because he once fancied himself in love with Isola; and I know he is afraid she will break her heart if he marries me."

Fanny listened in breathless astonishment, mingled with indignation, at this flippant allusion to Isola. She asked:

"Has Philip Vane actually asked you to marry him, Savella?"

"Of course he has, and I have promised to do so. My uncle found us together in the woodland; and such a life as I have since led is enough to disgust one with everything. I am not kept a prisoner in my own room, but I might as well be, for my aunt watches me unceasingly, and for the last three days I

have been unable to communicate with my darling Philip. She intercepted the letters I tried to send to him, and amuses herself in my presence by repeating portions of them aloud, and turning them into ridicule. Pleasant, isn't it, to have one's tender effusions undergo such an ordeal as that!"

Fanny could not repress a smile, but she tried to speak in a sympathetic tone:

"It is provoking to be treated in such a manner; but, my dear Savella, your aunt only wishes to save you from giving your hand to a man who has already shown his motives in seeking a wife. I assure you you need have no fears on Isola's account, for I know that she has ceased to care for Philip. If Mr. Fontaine objects to him as a suitor to you, it is for a better cause than that. No doubt he regards Mr. Vane as a miracle of versatility, since he has professed a grand passion for two girls in the space of three months."

"You are as bad as the rest, Fanny. You all sing the same song," replied Savella, impatiently. "Just as if many a man has not fancied himself desperately in love with one woman till another, that suited him better, appeared on the scene. Philip loves me, I am sure of that; and I do not hesitate to say that I adore him, and I will marry him in spite of them all."

"Will you really act contrary to the will of your uncle? Oh, Savella, that will be very wrong, and no good can come of it, be sure of that."

"Then evil may come; for I will marry him, even if I am compelled to elope with him. Dear Fanny, if you would only take one letter from me, and deliver it to him, I should think you the very best girl in the world."

Fanny shrank in dismay from the proposal, and hurriedly said:

"I would not do such a thing for the world. I should feel guilty whenever I looked at Mr. Fontaine; and if you and Philip were not happy together, I should accuse myself of helping to make your misery. No, Savella; you will give up this mad plan; and be sure that I will never help you to carry it out."

"You are very cross, Fanny. When I heard you were here, I thought I might persuade you to stand my friend. I am a stranger here, surrounded by those who are unfriendly to my happiness; for I aver to you that it can only be found in a union with the man to whom I have irrevocably given my heart. Even if Isola was once attached to him, her affection was weak and commonplace compared with that I feel. She has found consolation; but nothing could console me for losing Philip."

Savella covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears. Fanny said everything to her that she thought could console her, but she firmly resisted the passionate entreaties of Savella to become the medium of communication between her and her lover.

Urged on by so mercenary a wooer as Philip Vane, Fanny saw plainly enough what the end must be, with so impassioned and reckless a being as the young Italian.

When convinced that Miss Berkeley would not assist her to correspond with him, Savella endeavoured to extort from her a promise to report to her lover the strict watch that was held over her; but Fanny declined to take any part in an affair that must be a source of great annoyance to Fontaine, and she soon afterward took her leave.

Dashaway never before made the distance between Fountains and the Vale in so short a space of time, noted as he was for his speed. She quickly dismounted, gathered up her sweeping riding skirt, and rushed up-stairs in a glow of excitement, to impart her news.

Isola was seated in a large chair, in front of a cheerful fire, which the cool mountain air rendered necessary to one in her delicate health. She laid aside the book she had been reading before Fanny's unceremonious advent, and regarded her glowing face and eager expression with much surprise.

"What can have happened to excite you so much, Fanny?" she quickly asked. "Is anything wrong at Fountains?"

"I have the strangest news. But you can bear it with philosophy, Isola. You no longer care for him, thank heaven! Has Mr. Fontaine hinted to you what has lately happened to Savella?"

"No; he has looked distressed and annoyed about something, but he evaded my inquiries. What has occurred? Nothing serious, I hope."

"Well, I must speak out the truth at once, for I can never tell anything in a roundabout way. Savella is in despair because Mr. Fontaine refuses to permit her to marry Philip. It seems that they have carried on quite a romantic flirtation, by meeting in the woodland, ever since you have been ill. Her uncle found them together; and since that time she has been under the surveillance of the senora. But Savella openly avows her resolution to marry him, even if she has to elope with him to do so."

Isola slightly changed colour, but when Fanny ceased speaking, she calmly said:

"If anything had been before wanting to complete my disenchantment, this would suffice. Philip does

not love Savella, for only yesterday when he called here, and we were left alone a few moments, he presumed to refer to the past. He hurriedly said, 'Let me not as I may, Isola, you may always feel assured that you, and you alone, have I ever loved.' I silenced him by a look, and left him. Now his words are explained; even when they were uttered this poor girl had given him her troth. Oh, Fanny, is there no possibility of saving Savella from so unprincipled a man?"

"I fear not. She is madly in love with him, and nothing that you or I could say would have the least weight with her. She has three guardians to look after her; for I gathered from her that the senora and Mr. Somerton are as much opposed to the marriage as Mr. Fontaine is, and if they cannot keep her out of Philip's arms, I am sure we should fail."

"On what ground does her aunt oppose her wishes? She knows very little of Philip, and his social position is quite good enough to satisfy her aspirations for her niece, I should think."

"I do not know. But the senora is quite savage against the poor girl, who seems almost in a state of despair because she cannot see nor communicate with her beloved. I declare I was quite touched, and once I was almost tempted to take a letter she had already written for him. If the Italian only was against the match, I would have done so; but for the world I would do nothing to offend Mr. Fontaine."

"I hope my father does not object on my account. I could now see Philip give his hand to another with perfect equanimity. If Savella is so resolute in her determination to marry him as you declare her to be, she had better be married at home than incur the scandal of an elopement."

"Savella thinks her uncle's opposition is grounded on delicacy towards you; but I assured her that Mr. Vane has no longer the power to influence your happiness in any way. She is vain and silly enough to think that he only admired you till she came—that she is his true love and predestined mate."

"If Philip had left me the least ground to suppose that he has really transferred his affections to her, I would use my influence with my father to induce him to consent. But convinced as we all are that he only seeks her for her wealth, I cannot do so. With her temperament, if Savella discovered that he had married her from interested motives, I am afraid she would go mad or kill herself."

"Very likely; for she seems a reckless creature who would be capable of any desperate act in a moment of passion. But I am not quite sure that the consequences may not be as fatal if she finds herself irrevocably separated from Philip. I declare she made me shiver more than once while she talked with me. She seems to have no reticence—no sense of delicacy or pride. It may be her Italian nature; but it is so different from yours and mine that it frightens me."

"Perhaps it will be best for you to tell my father what Savella said. He will then be able to judge better of the course it will be best to pursue towards her."

"It seems like a violation of confidence to do so; yet I have the impression that Savella would not care, if I could further her wishes by doing so. Mark my words, Isola; if Mr. Fontaine proves inexorable, Savella will find means to evade them all and give her hand to Philip Vane."

"I fear as much myself, yet what can be done to prevent it?"

"I do not know—I am in a state of bewilderment. Let us consult cousin Carrie; she always knows what is best to be done."

Miss Carleton's room joined the one occupied by the two girls, and they found her writing letters. She laid aside her pen and smilingly asked:

"What is it, Fanny? Your face speaks volumes. What have you come to consult me about now?"

She was soon put in possession of all the facts of the case, and, after a few moments of thought, said:

"I think you can do nothing effective, Fanny. If Mr. Fontaine, with his gentleness and right feeling, cannot restrain this headstrong girl from rushing into certain misery, no one else can."

She turned again to the writing table as she added:

"I am sorry to dismiss you so abruptly; but my letter must be ready for the mail bag, which goes in half-an-hour."

Fanny laughingly said:

"You are my oracle, cousin Carrie, so I shall be mute on this subject in Mr. Fontaine's presence."

"Be assured, my dear, that he understands as much as you can tell him, and he will take every precaution to prevent his heiress from becoming the prey of a fortune-hunter. I give Philip up; he has disappointed me; I can never have any respect for him again."

The two girls returned to their own room, and a short time afterwards Fontaine himself alighted at the door, on his way from Dr. Sinclair's. Isola saw him through the window and went down to meet him.

His unusual paleness, in spite of his rapid ride in

the cool morning air, and the singular expression of his eyes, struck her as soon as she looked at him, and she inquired with solicitude if he was not well. With assumed cheerfulness, he replied:

"I am not quite as well as usual, and I have been over to Sinclair's to consult him. He thinks that I am threatened with an attack of fever, but I do not agree with him. I have used my eyes too much of late, and they are singularly affected—that is all. Do not look so much alarmed, my love, for there is not much the matter with me. I have rode ten miles this morning, and I do not feel at all fatigued by the exertion."

He asked to see all the family; and when the servant went to inform them of his arrival, he turned suddenly towards Isola, and said:

"Are you not well enough to come back to me now, my dear? I miss you so much that I can no longer do without you. Will you return this afternoon if I send the carriage for you?"

"Certainly—I would have gone before, but you seemed contented that I should stay; and they have all been so kind to me here that I could not leave them till you expressed a wish for me to do so. I must go home to nurse you back to health, for I can see that you are far from well."

He went to a window, looked vaguely through it, and then abruptly turning, said:

"I do not know what may soon happen to me, Isola. I feel that I am trembling on the verge of some dire calamity; but remember one thing: I have not neglected your interests—I have done the best I could for you, and if my fears are verified, you will find my will with Winston in town. You will be independent, though not rich. There, that is all I have to say, and hence come Mrs. Berkeley and Miss Carleton. Put off that scared look, child, lest they think I have been kidding you, and that, I am sure, you have never needed from me."

He turned with his usual grace of manner to greet the ladies, who at that moment entered; and making a great effort, he was soon engaged in a cheerful conversation with them. But through all it was evident that some great weight lay heavy at his heart. This Miss Carleton accounted for through the information Fanny had so lately conveyed to her, but she could not understand why his eyes always wandered beyond her, nor why his fingers should work so nervously, as if eager to grasp something from which he restrained himself.

He presently spoke of his intention to send for Isola that afternoon, and Mrs. Berkeley reluctantly consented to give her up before her health was completely re-established.

"I must have her back again!" Fontaine said, with emphasis. "I feel lost without my consolation. Neither Savella nor any one else can supply her place. Yes—one other might, but that is a dream that has always eluded me," and his eyes fell upon Miss Carleton with a singular expression. "There is one woman in the world who could have made me supremely happy had not a phantom come between her and myself. There it is now; I see it as plainly as I see you, Mrs. Berkeley. It is *always* there; it will never leave me again."

The two ladies exchanged glances of alarm. Fontaine noticed them, and asked, with a nervous laugh:

"What have I said to make you look so? I am not quite well to-day, and I have been over to see Sinclair. He insists that I must be quiet for a few days, so this is my farewell call for some time to come. That is why I wished to see you all. Where is the general, George and his wife, and my pretty Fanny?"

"All except Fanny have gone away for a few days. Here she comes now?"

Fanny approached him and offered her hand, as she cheerfully said:

"Good morning, Mr. Fontaine. I have been to your house to-day, to visit Savella."

"And did you see her? Did the grim old Jezebel that keeps watch over her let you in her captive's bower? Of course you are aware that Savella is doing penance for her sins. She is not as obedient as she should be, and I placed her in charge of that blot on humanity—that dire Nemesis who has come here to blar the little sunshine God has left in my life. I don't think she'll hurt Savella; but if she had the power I know she would rid herself of me. But I'll turn the tables on her yet; she shall not *always* stay in my house. The phantom is enough to haunt one man, without having a flesh and blood goblin seated for ever at his board."

A gleam of sound reason enabled him to read the expression of the appalled faces around him, and he suddenly checked himself. After a pause, he spoke in his natural manner.

"Isola, I will send for you as soon as I get home. Good morning, ladies."

He moved quickly across the floor, but suddenly turning to Miss Carleton, he seized her hand, carried it to his lips, and fervently said:

"Oh, Carrie Carleton, I have held the secret long in my heart, but now it forces its way to my lips. I love you as few can love, but the ban of an evil doom was upon me, and I dared not ask you to share my broken life. Pity me—pray for me, for the curse of God has fallen on me in its most appalling form. I will whisper the dire secret in your ear, but do not breathe it to any mortal creature. There is blood upon my hand, and the stain has crept slowly up—up, till at last it has reached my brain, and maddened it."

The last words were uttered in a thrilling whisper, and dropping her hand as suddenly as he had taken it, Fontaine rushed from the room. In another moment he was dashing through the avenue at the top of Lucifer's speed, and before the alarmed group could send a servant in pursuit of him, he was out of sight.

CHAPTER XXII.

This narrow knows no seasons;
The morning, noon, and night with her 'tis the same.
Shakespeare.

On the abrupt departure of Fontaine, Isola sank down, nearly fainting, with large tears rolling over her pallid cheeks. She moaned:

"Oh, my father—my dear, good father—he must indeed be mad to accuse himself of a crime he could never have committed. Dear Mrs. Berkeley, cousin Carrie, what can I do to help him?"

Miss Carleton seemed frozen into marble. She stood pale and motionless upon the spot on which Fontaine had left her, incapable of thought or action. Mrs. Berkeley drew the weeping Isola to her heart, and softly said:

"You must go to him, my child, and show him that you are grateful for all his past kindness. In this extremity, only those that have him should minister to his wants. My dear Isola, this will be a sad trial to you."

"I can prove myself equal to it," she replied, with firmness. "My life belongs to him, and, if necessary, it shall be devoted to his service."

"That is the right feeling, my love. Pray to God, and He will sustain you under this bitter trial. Fanny, go with Isola and help her to put up her things. It will be better not to wait for the carriage from Fontaine, for it may be forgotten. I will order mine, to take her home at once."

Isola thanked her, and the two girls went up to their chamber. When they were alone they wept together a few moments; but Fanny aroused herself and said:

"This will never do, Isola; I have so much to say to you before you go back among those people, that you must compose yourself and listen to me. My dear Isola, I am about to bring a very serious charge against one, at least, of the strangers now at Fontaine—a charge in which I firmly believe your own life to be involved."

"Fanny, are we all going mad together? What can you mean?"

"I mean this—that the medicine prepared for you by that odious man, who, I believe, is no clergyman at all, was intended to have any other than a sanative effect,—that it made you ill in place of curing you."

"But how can that be? I have regularly taken the drops, and my health has improved with every day."

"You have not taken them since you came here. My suspicions were aroused, I scarcely know how, and I was determined that you should use them no more. I poured them out myself, and filled the phial with water. It is my firm belief that if you had continued to use them you would now be past help."

Isola listened with dilating eyes and half-parted lips. After a pause, she said:

"But, Fanny, I was ill before I left home, and Mr. Somerton gave me little medicine till I came hither. You wrong him cruelly by such assertions as you have just made."

"I am convinced that I do not. He has found means to give you poison at home, and the drops were designed to keep up the symptoms of slow decay, that suspicions of foul play might not be aroused. I am certain of it."

"That is impossible; he could not place it in my food, for that is prepared and served by our own people, and any attempt to tamper with it would instantly be detected. Besides, others must equally have partaken of it."

"Could he not find means to enter your room when no one was there, and put it in something you use? Think a moment—is it not possible for him to have done this?"

"I never eat except at meal times. I do not keep candies or anything of that kind in my chamber. I only use iced water, which is placed by my bedside every night. I always drink before retiring; but

water is so pure an element that I must have detected the taste of any foreign substance mingled with it. My dear Fanny, do not seek to make me more unhappy than I already am by infusing suspicion in my mind against those with whom I must live in the same house."

"Isola, if I had not the conviction that your life depends upon it, I would never do so, but there can be no harm in precaution. This man confesses that he is a learned chemist; could he not easily find some tasteless agent which will work his ends without bringing suspicion on himself? Do not use the water placed upon your night-stand. Make your maid bring you some, and look it up in your closet. If you will do this you may be saved; if you refuse, I cannot answer for the consequences."

"But what can Mr. Somerton have to gain by getting rid of me? I am not in his way, even if Senora Roselli has betrayed jealousy of my father's affection for me. That is natural, perhaps, for she no doubt considers Savella entitled to the first place in his affections."

"My dear, these people are mercenary; I believe their interests are united in some way, and the thought that Mr. Fontaine may give you even a moiety of his wealth is odious to them, and they will sacrifice you to prevent it. I exonerate Savella from any participation in their plans; neither do I think they would dare to trust her with them."

"If your convictions are well founded, Fanny, every precaution I can take will be unavailing; for, if one effort fails, they will find means to reach my life in some other way," said Isola, with blanched cheeks and quivering lips. "Oh, Fanny, this is too—too dreadful. I must go back to my father at all hazards; must be thrown daily and hourly with these people, with such thoughts and fears as you have aroused continually rising against them."

"Yet you must beware of betraying your mistrust, Isola. Only be on the watch till you gain some evidence to confirm my suspicions. Then, be sure, the whole Berkeley family will come forward to your assistance if Mr. Fontaine should not be in a condition to aid you. I cannot help thinking that the arts of these people have in some way brought him to his present condition. The senora has forced herself upon him, though he evidently loathes her."

"If I thought that, I would pursue them relentlessly, ruthlessly, till they met the punishment of their crime," said Isola, with flashing eyes. "Oh, Fanny, I thought myself very miserable when I saw the condition to which my poor father is reduced; but what you have just said has doubly increased the burden. If money is their object, why do they not rid themselves of him, as you think they have tried to do of me?"

"They have already done worse, for his mind is unhinged, and it is their work."

A knock at the door interrupted them, and a servant came in, and said:

"Please, young ladies, the carriage is ready to take Miss Isola home, and lunch is set in her room."

"Dear me! and we have done nothing towards packing up. Gather up Miss Isola's things, Jessy, and put them in her trunk, while we go down and speak to grandma. I shall go to Fountains with you, Isola, to see how things are going on there."

The girl bustled herself in packing, while the two young ladies put on their hats and shawls. On descending, they found Mrs. Berkeley alone, looking grave and self-absorbed.

"Where is cousin Carrie?" asked Fanny. "I expected to find her with you, grandma."

"She has retired to her own room, and does not wish to be disturbed. I am glad to see that you are going home with Isola, my dear. I hope you will bring me back a good report of our poor Claude. Here is a cup of tea, Isola; you must drink it, child, for it will do you good."

Isola thankfully accepted and obediently swallowed it, though she felt as if every drop must strangle her. In a few moments they were ready to set out, and tenderly kissing her, Mrs. Berkeley said:

"I will be sure to come over to-morrow to see how you are all getting along, my love. Take care of your own health, for you are not yet strong. Even if our dear Claude is long ill, you have so many faithful servants that you need not break yourself down waiting on him. Remember that I have a claim upon you now, as my possible future grand-daughter."

The young girl murmured a few grateful words, and when she and Fanny were gone, Mrs. Berkeley sat many moments with her face shaded by her hand, absorbed in deep and painful thought.

With a heavy sigh she arose when the servant came in to remove the lunch tray, and after a few seconds of indecision, she slowly proceeded towards the apartment of Miss Carleton.

Her low knock was unnoticed, and after repeating it with the same result, Mrs. Berkeley softly unclosed the door and entered the room. The blinds were shut,

the curtains lowered, and the room was only lighted by a few dying embers that glowed faintly upon the hearth. As her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, she saw a figure reclining in a large chair, her eyes closed, and her long glittering hair falling in a heavy coil to the floor.

The attitude was one of utter abandonment to grief, and the colourless face showed that a storm had passed over its owner which had laid her soul desolate. She neither moved nor spoke when Mrs. Berkeley drew near, and looked compassionately upon her.

After a few moments Mrs. Berkeley returned to the door, looked in, and then drawing a seat beside her cousin, took her cold hand in her own.

"Carrie, darling, I am sorry to see you so overcome. Has this blow so deeply wounded your heart? Yet, if it is so, you have acted your part so well as even to deceive me. I thought Claude Fontaine no more to you than a friend. Speak to me, Carrie, for your face looks as if death is in your heart."

Miss Carleton slowly unclosed her eyes, from which large drops were now slowly welling, and after a struggle with herself, said:

"It is even so, cousin Betty—there is death to hope, to respect for him I thought so far above all other men; and I feel as if a mortal wound has been dealt me. Oh, heavens! what can be the crime that has destroyed the spring of that noble mind? which has tugged at his heartstrings till remorse has culminated in madness? Tell me—tell me, my dear friend, that I may see if your thought tallies with my own, fearful as it is."

"Can you bear that I shall utter it, Carrie? I have long feared and doubted, but what has this day happened has confirmed my darkest fears."

"Speak! Ah, what can I not bear when with his own lips he accused himself? From another's, I should have rejected the imputation with scorn; but from himself, it bears the stamp of truth, although it is evident that his mind is partially distraught. Of what crime do you believe him to have been guilty?"

"Of fratricide!" and the word fell in low and reluctant tones from her lips.

Miss Carleton uttered a cry and threw her hands over her face. Her frame shuddered in every nerve, and she faintly moaned:

"You have spoken my own thought, yet I dared scarcely acknowledge it to myself. Oh, Claude, Claude—my noble Claude! what could have led you to commit so fatal a deed?"

After a long pause, she seemed to become more composed, and Mrs. Berkeley gently said:

"You will suffer bitterly, Carrie; for you must put aside the dream that I now see has nestled in your heart for years. When Claude Fontaine first returned from his travels, I own that I hoped he would woo and win you. But when I saw him again—when I noted his inexplicable adusness, and remembered the strange mystery that shrouded the fate of his brother, suspicions were awakened in my mind, which at the time were discussed between the general and myself. Unwilling to cherish them, we agreed to dismiss them, as far as possible, from our thoughts. I should have cast them utterly away, but for one thing: I saw that Claude was becoming deeply attached to you. Cautious as he ever was not to betray his interest in you, I saw it evinced in many quiet ways, and the old fear came back to me when he did not ask you to become his wife. I felt assured that he dared not put the burden of his sin upon another, and that other the woman he loves."

"I have long known that he loves me, in spite of his efforts to conceal it. But never until to-day has he uttered a word that could betray it. Oh, cousin Betty, to have the most cherished secret of one's life proclaimed in a moment of maddened frenzy is too—too terrible! It is that which has so broken me down. I feel as if I have no longer either life or hope to contend against fate."

"You must not give up to such feelings, Carrie, for there may be much for us all yet to do for this unfortunate man. I am afraid that he has fallen into execrable hands, and the woman of whom he spoke in such bitter terms may gain the power to tyrannize over both himself and that helpless child, who is too frail to stand much. In a moment of frenzy Claude may have stained his hand with the blood of his brother; but if all the facts could be made known to us, I believe there would be much to extenuate even such a crime as that. He is one of the noblest of men, and I believe him to be incapable of a mean action; I will never forsake him in his hour of need, and Isola must be looked after as one of ourselves. Rouse up, my dear Carrie—exert your usual self-command, for we do not know what duties may devolve on us in this terrible crisis of poor Claude's fate."

"Leave me this one day to my sorrow, and then I promise to be ready to do my part, sad as it may be. But for this day my heart must revel in its own wretchedness. I knew that I am weak, but I am not wicked, and God will help me to bear my burden."

"I will go, Carrie. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness,' and I leave you to such consolation as you well know how to seek."

Mrs. Berkeley left the darkened room, into which no one else was admitted during that day.

Alone with her sorrow wrestled that fair and high-souled woman, who had seen the idol of her pride and affections dashed in shame and humiliation at her feet. The first bright days of her youth were no longer hers, but she was still as fresh in heart as if seventeen summers had only passed over her head, and the power of a strong and fully developed nature had given deeper vitality to her long cherished passion than a mere girl could have been capable of feeling.

With such a woman, to have her love buried in the awful grave which had so suddenly yawned to receive it, was worse than death itself.

Alone with her sorrow! Ah! let the veil drop, for her pride is as strong as her love, and into that holy sanctuary, a crushed and bleeding heart, let no profane eye be permitted to glance.

CHAPTER XXIII

Loquacious, loud, and turbulent of tongue,
Awed by no shame, by no respect controlled,
In plotting busy, in reproaches bold.

ANON.

WHEN Isola and Fanny reached Fountains, they found its master promenading the lawn, engaged in earnest conversation with Somerton. He seemed mere composed and quite oblivious of the strange scene in which he had performed the principal part. As he assisted them from the carriage, he said to Isola:

"It was very kind in Mrs. Berkeley to send you over, my dear, and doubly kind in Fanny to accompany you home; but if you had waited a little while, I should have sent the carriage for you. Now that you are here, my little Fan, you must remain with Isola through the night. Between you, you may brighten up Savella, for she is suffering from a terrible fit of the blues."

"Thank you, Mr. Fontaine," replied Fanny; "I think I will accept your invitation, for to-morrow grandma is coming over herself, and I can return home with her."

"That is right, my dear. Now go in and find Savella. She refuses to walk out, and the senora is almost a prisoner in the house on her account. Since you have come, she can leave her charge with you a little while. I am not so much afraid that Savella will act contrary to your wishes, but her aunt watches her unceasingly. Go in, my dears, you will find everything as usual."

He talked fast and nervously, but they saw no other indication of the aberration of mind which he had betrayed a few hours before.

Somerton advanced and said something civil to Isola on her return home, but she shrank from him with a feeling of repulsion she could not control. He read it in her expressive face, and a scornful smile struggled to his lips as he watched her retreating figure, while his fingers slowly closed in a vice-like clasp as he mentally said:

"You have strangely evaded me once, but now I will surely deal with you. You and Fontaine are both at my mercy from this hour."

With smiling lips he resumed his conversation with Fontaine, and the two girls ascended the stairs and entered Isola's apartment.

Her maid was there, and expressed her delight at the return of her young mistress.

"Oh, you've come back to us, miss, looking as bright and rosy as the flowers in the summer, and I can't tell you how glad I am to see you again."

"Thank you, Colia; how is Aggy?"

"She never says she's well, miss, as you know, but I think she has taken your being away so long to heart; but she'll be all right now."

At that moment Aggy came in, her face beaming with delight. She exclaimed:

"Oh, the joy of my heart has come back, looking like your own pretty self. What have you done to her, Miss Fanny, to bring back the colour to her pretty face? If she gets anything at the Vale that I don't give her, I must find out what it is, and learn how to prepare it for her. What have you fed her on to make her look so well?"

"We have feasted her on kindness, Aggy, and I think it agrees with her."

The old woman's face clouded, and she said:

"That's the one thing that I can't get for her, you know, Miss Fanny, only so far as we are concerned."

Isola took her hand between her own rosy palms, and, smiling in her face, said:

"I am quite well again, Aggy, and I intend to remain so if prudence can help me to retain my health. I spoke to Giles as we drove to the door; he seems to be as well as usual."

"Ah! you wouldn't say that if you knewed. He's afraid of his own shadow, and he won't lie down

of nights without making up the fire, that we may have light in the room. I don't believe he sleeps half the time, for the minute it begins to grow dark, there he is at it again—throwing on the coals, till the blaze roars up the chimney again, and he turns his eyes round till one would think that the emissary of evil was at his heels. Something's gone wrong as sure as he's born; but he's silent, and won't tell me about it."

At that moment the door which communicated with Savella's room was thrown suddenly open, and she rushed in and closed it after her.

"There! I wish I could only look her in and keep her there! How do you do, girls? I think you might have been in to see me before this; for Fanny knows that I am under a she-dragon who watches every movement I make. That is the reason I have not been to see you for the last few days, Isola. Now you have come back here, I hope you will make some diversion in my favour; that is, if you are not jealous. Fanny has told you, I suppose."

"Yes," Fanny has told me all," replied Isola, calmly; "and, I assure you, I do not feel that I have any cause to be jealous. But you speak very imprudently, Savella."

"Oh, I forgot the servants were here; but they know well enough why I am mowed up in the house, for they always find out everything. Their chatter is of no consequence, anyhow. Let them go about their business while we talk together."

With an offended air, Aggy marched out of the room, commanding Celis to follow her. At the door she paused, and said:

"I don't wish to intrude any longer on you, Miss Fontaine, so me and Celis will go about our business."

"The impudent old thing! She is always ready with an answer," said Savella; "but uncle has spoiled her so. I am glad we are rid of them, for now we can talk a few minutes, without interruption."

"Oh, Fanny, I am so happy, for, in spite of my aunt, I have seen my beautiful Philip."

"How have you managed to do so?" asked Fanny, in surprise. "Your uncle said that you refused to go out."

"So I have; but this morning I sat beside the window that looks towards Dunlora; and Philip came on horseback to the edge of the woodland, and waved his white handkerchief to me. I replied to his signal before the very eyes of my aunt, and such a frightful passion as she fell into you never saw. I thought she would have beaten me, as she used to when I was a child; but I am more than a match for her now, and she is afraid to attempt that."

The two friends looked at each other, scarcely knowing what reply to make to this; but again the door opened, this time very softly, and Senora Roselli glided in with her stealthy tread, her glittering black eyes fixed severely upon her niece.

"I overheard you, Savella, speaking of me in so disrespectful a manner as to be a disgrace to any well brought-up girl. I hope these young ladies will excuse your ill-breeding, and not accuse me of neglect toward you; for I have found it impossible to inculcate any sense of propriety in so wilful a creature as you are. My dear Isola, I am happy to see you at home again, looking quite as well as before your illness."

"Thank you, madam; I believe I have entirely recovered," Isola briefly replied.

The senora scarcely regarded her, and she saw that the clear, lustrous complexion, the brilliant eyes betrayed no remains of the insidious agent which had been so craftily infused into her blood.

Her impassive face revealed nothing of what was passing in her mind, while she conversed freely and easily with them a few moments. Then, looking at her watch, she said:

"It is nearly the dinner-hour; come Savella, your hair is out of order, and you must change your dress before going down."

"I don't care how I look," she recklessly replied; "but I suppose uncle Claude will be offended if I appear like a fright; but I think you might leave me here to talk with the girls a few moments."

"You will have time enough to tell them all you can have to say after your toilette is made. Come."

Her last word was imperative, and Savella, making a grimace, slowly followed her into her own apartment.

(To be continued.)

COUNTER IRRITATION.—The first occasion on which I ever saw Dr. Whately (observes a correspondent) was under curious circumstances. I accompanied my late friend Dr. Field to visit professionally some members of the archbishop's household at Redesdale, Stillorgan. The ground was covered by two feet of snow, and the thermometer was down almost to zero. Knowing the archbishop's character for humanity, I expressed much surprise to see an old labouring man in

his shirt-sleeves felling a tree "after hours" in the demesne, while a heavy shower of sleet drifted pitilessly in his wrinkled face. "That labourer," replied Dr. Field, "whom you think the victim of pre-latical despotism, is no other than the archbishop curing himself of a headache. When his grace has been reading and writing more than ordinarily, and finds any pain or confusion about the cerebral organization, he puts both to flight by rushing out with an axe, and slashing away at some ponderous trunk. As soon as he finds himself in a profuse perspiration he gets into bed, wraps himself in Limerick blankets, falls into a sound slumber, and gets up buoyant."—*Memoirs of Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin.*

ABDALLA'S PRESENTIMENT.

BY COL. WALTER R. DENLAP.

WE had laid our plans for leaving Palamew, and had already commenced to make our preparations; but we were not permitted to carry our designs into execution without some delay. I was engaged in cleaning my Antwerp rifle, and Harry was performing the same operation upon his double-barrel, when Neafie came into the room with a look of intense satisfaction upon his face.

"No more of that, gentlemen," he cried, addressing Ben and Abner, who were packing the saddle-bags. "You are not to get off so easily. You may as well unpack and have your rifles ready for use."

"What now?" said I, as I snatched my rammer into its place.

"You are booked for another tramp with me, my dear colonel, that is all."

"Not too fast, captain. You must remember that we are off early in the morning."

"Exactly, colonel; but not in the direction you imagine. A trooper has just come in from Edir, and he brings information that a pair of tigers—a couple of tremendous old fellows—are raising all manner of disturbance there. The natives are in alarm, and must soon leave their homes if the monsters cannot be captured."

"What is Edir, and where is it?"

"It is a small village, at the foot of the mountains, six leagues south-east of us."

Of course, such an inducement as this was not to be disregarded. I was anxious to have a look at the tigers; and Harry and Phil Darley were with me. Abner and Ben would have preferred to go in another direction, but they professed to be not very particular.

It was now quite late in the day; so we concluded that we would not start until the following morning, as we could then take our own time, and have the afternoon and evening before us for work. We slept well, and arose before the sun; and by six o'clock we were on our way.

Our Shikarees, Abdalla, who was generally very blithe and sofling, was on this morning particularly grave and solemn. I rode up by his side and asked him if he was unwell, at the same time telling him that he need not have come with us if he had felt unable.

"No, sahib—I am not sick," he replied, slowly shaking his head.

"Something troubles you?" I suggested.

"Yes, sahib. Something is going wrong with me. There is a dark spot before me."

I knew that the Mohammedans were great fatalists, and I asked Abdalla if he fancied that some impending evil was at hand.

"Yes," he said, "I know it. The angel Azrael is not far from me."

According to the Moslem creed, Azrael is the angel of death; and I laughed at the Shikaree, and told him to cheer up. But he only shook his head, declaring that his impressions were not to be put away so easily.

"What is to be, must be," he said; "and man cannot change it. But he may be nothing very bad. Wait, and we shall see."

Thus speaking, he rode on to the side of Malek, while I joined Darley and Neafie.

We reached Edir before noon, when we found the people trembling with fear and anguish. During the night last past one of their best Shikarees had been killed by the tigers, and his body carried off; and two fine cows had also been slain.

We went out with some of the villagers to the edge of the jungle, where we found three or four well-constructed mechauns in the trees; but it did not strike us that they were in favourable positions. The jungle was thick and hard-bottomed, stretching away to the southward and eastward, while to the north arose a succession of rocky hills. Neafie suggested that the haunt of the tigers was up among the caves. The Shikarees of Edir knew that it was so, but they had not dared to venture up there. They had built their mechauns as near to the tigers' paths

as they could, and the beasts had passed them several times, but they had not been able to slay them.

Under the guidance of some of the bolder of the natives we found the place where the tigers were in the habit of striking the mountain, and at length we hit upon their track. Upon a thorn bush we found shreds of the cotton garment of the Shikaree who had been carried off, and a little further on we found a trail of blood in a gully which had been washed out by the rains. It was evident enough that the tigers had gone up this way; and it was very likely that they would come down by the same path.

It was now about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the heat was quite oppressive. Should we return to the village, or should we seek some shelter where we were?

"We are now half way up the mountain," said Neafie, "and to go to the village and back will take us at least two hours. The tigers are somewhere about us, and it is not impossible that they may come down as soon as the sun begins to relax its strength of heat. You may be sure that the tigers will come this way, and if we can find a good hiding-place near their track we shall be pretty sure to get a pop at them."

My mind had been made up from the first. I did not wish to go down the mountain until we had seen the game. I had no confidence in the mechauns at the edge of the jungle. The tigers could give them a wide berth; but in the mountain path we had them. Of all our party, Abdalla was alone inclined to return to the village. I told him to go if he wished; but he would not leave us.

Some seventy or eighty yards below the spot where we had held this consultation the gully ran by the side of a perpendicular face of a rock, where we might find the cover we wanted. We went thither, and were suited exactly. A little further down was a seam-like opening in the rock, which led us to the top of a cliff overlooking the path, and when we reached the latter point we found ourselves in about as favourable a position as we could have desired. Upon the moss-crust grew bushes enough to serve us as a curtain, while the towering crags behind us shielded us from the sun, which was fast turning toward the west.

Thus we sat an hour. I pulled out my watch, and found it to be almost four o'clock. The tigers were likely to come now at any time, and we made ready to receive them. Should they come both together, which was most probable, we must be careful of our lead, for two such animals were not easily to be killed. We arranged ourselves so that we all had a look in the path, and those who could shoot the best took the most favourable positions.

At half-past four we received a note of warning from Abdalla, who, with Malek, was highest up on the look-out. He had seen nothing, but he said he could hear the tigers coming. And he was right. In a very short time one of the man-eaters came in sight—a magnificent fellow, with sleek, glossy skin; a breast broad and full; legs of tremendous size and power—came slowly down the gully, his long, lithe body swaying almost like a serpent's. Behind him came his mate, somewhat smaller, but certainly more sinister looking. Abdalla drew back against the rocks in our rear, and sat down with his face between his knees; but we had no time then to pay attention to him. The tigers were almost at the point where we must take them if we took them at all, and we took our aim. Harry and Darley and myself were to fire at the male, while Neafie and Abner and Ben were to look to the female—for it will be understood that we had a tiger and a tigress to deal with.

We had thus far made no noise, and the tigers came gliding down without suspecting the trouble that awaited them. I had my Antwerp rifle at my shoulder, and in it was one of my three-ounce steel-pointed chincupins. With such a weapon, thus charged, I felt that my best course of aim would be for the brain; for, if I hit my mark, the shot would be fatal.

We were to receive the word from Neafie, and he was to give it as soon as he could bring his sights to bear upon the tigress. The tiger was now within thirty yards, and I began to feel uneasy, for a few yards more of progress on his part would make it necessary for me to change my position. But I had no such need. The word came, and when I fired I was aiming at a point directly between the brute's eyes. With a terrific howl of pain he leaped into the air, and presently made off down the gully. Dan was by my side with my double-barrel all cocked, and seizing it as quickly as possible I gave the tiger a shot in the back, and in half a second more another ball from Harry struck him in the shoulder. I was thinking of nothing but how our tiger should be followed and secured, when a loud shout behind me caused me to turn, and as I did so I beheld a scene that made me start and quiver.

The tigress, which had been some four or five yards behind her mate, had, when wounded, leaped to the shelf where we were stationed, in doing which she must have made a bound of at least fifteen feet in

height. She had landed between Neafie and Ben Gilroy, and directly ahead of her was Abdallah, still crouching with his face between his knees. He started up, however, when he heard the shout of his companions; but before he could gain his feet the tigress was upon him. With one blow of her paw the furious beast struck him down, and on the next instant her terrible fangs were fastened upon his throat. I heard the poor fellow groan and gasp, and I saw him struggle feebly.

At another time, and under other circumstances, such a sight would have chilled me through; but now I felt only the hot rush of vengeful emotion. There was one bullet left in my Westley rifle; but I did not trust myself to fire it. I drew my sabre and leaped forward, and as I plunged the keen blade in behind the beast's shoulder Neafie and Darley were by my side, armed as I was. Neafie possessed a steady nerve, and without hesitation he dealt a blow upon the head of the demon, that crashed through to the brain.

The tigress had curled up under the effects of my lunge, but without relaxing her hold upon the Shikaree's throat. Upon receiving Neafie's blow, however, she threw up her head, and plunged forward against the rock upon which Abdallah had been leaning; and when she finally settled down upon her side we found that she was dead. She had three bullets in her lungs, one of which had touched her heart, when she leapt upon the shelf. My sword had passed directly through the heart, at the base of the ventricles; but it had required the crushing blow of Neafie's heavy sabre to settle her.

We lifted Abdallah to a bed of moss; but there was no help for him in this world. The veins and arteries of the neck had nearly all been severed, and life was entirely extinct. Malek was shocked, but he viewed the disaster quite philosophically.

"It couldn't have been otherwise," he said, shaking his head. "It was written at his birth, and for this end hath he lived. Great is God, and mysterious are his ways. May the good angels guard the spirit and lead it to the blessed land!"

Fitzoben and Dan assisted Malek in bearing the body down from the rock, while the rest of us pushed on after the other tiger; but we did not have to go a great way. We found him near the foot of the mountain, with his back against a tree, perfectly dead. The bullet from the old Antwerp had made a terrible hole in his skull, and his life had gone quickly out thereafter.

We had captured the tigers—two of the largest and fiercest I ever met—but the capture had cost us dear. Abdallah had not only been a good Shikaree, but he had been faithful and kind, and I had learned to love and respect him; and as we bore the body back to the village upon the skins of the tigers, our pace was sad and solemn.

That evening, by moonlight, we returned to Palamow; and as Harry and I rode side by side, we spoke of the presentiment of impending ill that had so strangely dwelt upon Abdallah's mind. That the Shikaree had been thus impressed we could not doubt; but whence the impression came we could not determine. After we reached Neafie's bungalow we continued the conversation over our pipes; but our thoughts, like the smoke which curled about our heads, wandering upon the verge of the unseen world, were lost in the mystic distance—melted away, without leaving even the shadow of a tangible form behind them.

THE BULL AND THE CHILD.

It is a curious fact, but one with which people who have had anything to do with that very formidable animal, the bull, are perfectly well acquainted, that the beast is wont to take a strange liking to children, and that the younger and more helpless these are, the better the bull seems to like them and to permit them to take liberties with him, which it would be very dangerous for older people, though equally well acquainted with him, to attempt.

An instance of these strange attachments of bulls to children occurred the other day in Sussex.

A farmer had a grandchild of some eight or nine years of age, to whom a young bull belonging to the said farmer had always shown a strong liking, permitting the child, when it accompanied the boy who looked after the bull to the field or the farmyard, to do what she liked with it.

At last the farmer wished to dispose of the bull, and it was put in the yard for examination, and either from the restraint or the visits of purchasers, it became irritated, so that, when the boy who looked after it went into the yard, instead of submitting, as usual, to his rule, it resisted, and at length got so hostile that he got a pitch-fork to protect himself, and the animal rushing onwards, the boy drove the fork into the bull's head and then made his escape, leaving one of the prongs, which had broken off, sticking in the poor animal's front.

Its pain and fury may be imagined; and the boy's fear was just as great. But just as he was escaping out of the yard, who should come in but the farmer's grand-daughter. She had heard the bull roar, and was coming to see what was the matter with her play-fellow. The boy told her to come away; but she only replied, "Poor fellow, he wants me. I'll go and see what's the matter with him." And accordingly the child entered the yard, and, going up to the suffering and infuriated animal, put her arms round its neck and began to caress it in her wonted manner; and the bull, bending its head, submitted to the caresses, and, in its bullish fashion, returned them; whilst the child, taking hold of the prong fixed in the animal's head, exclaimed "Poor fellow, let me pull it out," and tried with all her little strength to do so, but ineffectually.

Whilst this singular scene was going on, the farmer returned home, and hearing from the boy what had occurred to the bull and where his grandchild was, hastened with horror into the yard, expecting to find her gored or trampled to death. On entering, he witnessed the above curious scene. Still, he did not venture to face the bull. Though gentle enough with the child, the farmer saw that it was in agony, and that its fury could easily be roused against any intruder between it and the child. So he stole round to the back of the animal, and, whilst the child had its arm round its neck, he seized hold of the prong, and with a sudden effort drew it out. The animal bore the operation with all gentleness, for doubtless it thought the child was the operator, and suffered itself to be stalled as usual.

So ends my story of the bull and child. It is a true one, and is only, doubtless, one instance of the many that could be cited of the strange likings which these formidable and often ferocious beasts form to young children. The reason I do not attempt to assign. It may be because there is a natural affinity, extending even to the brute world, between great strength and utter helplessness. It may be that beasts appreciate gentleness of treatment. And if so, it is a lesson to men how they may best secure the attachment and obedience of their dumb servants, and so some humane purpose may be served by the story of the child and the bull.

THE DIFFERENCE TO YOU.

A YOUNG man named Fulton, who had been in business for a year, and in that time managed to get his affairs a little out of easy-going order, found himself one day with a note for a thousand pounds to meet, and nothing in bank for the occasion. This need not have been, for he had accounts on his books which, with timely attention, might have been collected, sufficient to give him more than the sum required.

Fulton, who had never exercised the prudent forethought of a business man, did not realize his situation until it had become perilous—until he was in actual contact with danger. If he had taken a week, or even a couple of days, in which to cast about for the ways and means by which the sum of a thousand pounds was to be obtained, there would have been time to try a second, and a third expedient if the first and second failed. But he had that weak vice of putting things off, so fatal to all success; and so the day and the hour came and found him unprepared, though six months previously he had given a written promise to pay the sum of one thousand pounds in discharge of an obligation through which he had been largely benefited.

On the day before his note fell due, Mr. Fulton, whenever his eyes rested on the little square piece of paper that gave notice touching the when and where of payment, felt a marked depression in the thermometer of his feelings. The way was not at all clear before him; and yet, with a strange lack of prudence, he deferred the effort on which so much depended, until the last hours of grace.

"I shall get through somehow," he said to himself, now and then, as the sense of trouble grew heavier; thus resting on a vague expectation of help rising up from the ground, as it were, at the last moment. For over two weeks he had been looking out for a remittance of three hundred pounds from a provincial town.

"If it arrives in the morning, I shall be that much easier," he remarked, taking comfort out of so dry a crumb. Now, if three days before, he had written to his debtor, stating his need, the three hundred pounds would have arrived by the next post. But procrastination was his evil genius.

To-morrow came. It was a dull, stormy day. Mr. Fulton had not rested very well through the night. Unpleasant thoughts kept intruding themselves, and driving off the sweet influences of sleep. The more he pondered his situation, the more environed by difficulties it seemed.

How was he to get the thousand pounds? He looked this way and that; planned this expe-

dient and that; but every way had its obstructions. Morning found him not only unrefreshed, but with unsteady nerves.

One hope remained. He would certainly receive the expected three hundred pounds by post that day, and this sum would give him nearly one-third of the amount he had to raise.

Earlier than usual, Mr. Fulton was at his office. His letters were on his desk. How eagerly did he run his eyes over the post-marks! There was none from the correspondent on whom he had so weakly relied.

Poor young man!

A sudden weakness depressed him—a sense of alarm pervaded his mind. He sat down, with a feeling of helplessness such as he had never experienced before.

"A thousand pounds! Where on earth is it to come from?" he murmured, resting his forehead on his hands, as he stood at his desk.

The thought of having his note dishonoured, and go to protest, was appalling. He looked the consequences in the face and shivered.

"But this won't do," he added, rousing himself. "I must get this money; and there is now only one way left—to borrow."

So, after arranging certain matters of business that required personal attention, he started forth on his unpleasant errand.

The first man upon whom he called said, "I'm on the borrowing list myself." The second replied, "I'm sorry, but haven't a pound over." The third answered, curtly, "Can't help you, my friend." The fourth said, "Everybody seems on the run for money to-day. This is the tenth call I have had in the last hour."

By this time our young friend, who had no large share of moral stamina—who was not apt to develop strength for the occasion, as difficulties threw themselves across his way—feeling weak and disheartened, went back to his office in order to gather up his bewildered thoughts. Two weeks before, in looking forward to this day, the collection of a thousand pounds seemed an easy thing; but now the task appeared hopeless.

The time had passed on until it was near twelve o'clock. It would not do to sit idle long. He must be out and at work if he would save himself. So, after a rest of twenty minutes, he started forth again. In passing the Custom House he saw approaching him a wholesale merchant, from whom he had bought merchandise now and then. His name was Hoffman.

In the few cases in which Mr. Fulton had made purchases from Mr. Hoffman, he had found him particularly kind and agreeable. The merchant inquired about his business prospects, and showed more of friendly interest than any one with whom he dealt. The sight of his pleasant face, which lit up when he saw Mr. Fulton, was like a gleam of sunshine to the gloomy heart of our young friend.

He took hope at once, and hope gave him confidence.

"Can you help me a little to-day, Mr. Hoffman?" he said, with a frankness in his manner that carried an influence in his favour. "Friends that I have relied upon have unexpectedly failed me, and I have a note to take up."

"How much do you want?" was the kindly spoken answer.

"Just a thousand pounds."

"For how long?"

"Three days. I have good accounts due me, and have only to ask for them. I needn't have been in a strait if I had not depended on another source. But I will know better next time."

Ah! when men get wrongly into difficult places, they are in great danger of using wrong means to extricate themselves. Error of any kind blunts in some degree the moral sense.

Mr. Fulton might have kept his words free from guile or false pretence, and yet not have failed in securing from Mr. Hoffman the help he needed.

"I can accommodate you," said the merchant, in a cheerful tone. "Walk round with me to my counting-house, and I will draw you a cheque."

What a light bowed the heart of Mr. Fulton gave! The clouds rolled away from his sky; the pressure went off from his feelings.

In less than half an hour from that time he was back in his office, with his note for a thousand pounds in hand and cancelled. He was in a state of tranquil satisfaction.

A sense of confidence and security had taken the place of doubt and fear. "Truly, a friend in need is a friend indeed," he said to himself, as he thought of Mr. Hoffman's kindness. "It is worth getting into trouble now and then, if it is only to find out whose professions of interest are real and whose only from the teeth outward. I'll know where to go next time."

Mr. Fulton felt a little exhausted after his morning's effort, and in no mood to continue the work of money-

raising, though he had bound himself in an honourable promise to return to Mr. Hoffman one thousand pounds in three days. He did not even write for the three hundred pounds he had been expecting to receive by post. "I will do that to-morrow," he said to himself—"there will be time enough for the mail to go and return."

In a half-hearted kind of way he went over his ledger to see what accounts were due, and made a rough memorandum of sums that he was certain could be easily collected, amounting in all to over two thousand pounds.

"Safe enough!" was the satisfying remark with which he shut up the ledger, and thrust the memorandum into a drawer, instead of making out the several accounts in order that the work of collection might be commenced early on the next day.

In the evening Mr. Fulton mentioned the kindness of Mr. Hoffman to his wife.

"I don't regret the worry I have had, now that I have discovered so good a friend," he said. "I feel safer—as if standing on firmer ground. If straightened again, I shall know just where to go."

"Don't fail to be prompt in returning the money," said his wife, who knew the weak place in his character.

"You must have a poor opinion of me," replied Mr. Fulton, slightly annoyed by the remark.

"No, I have a good opinion of you," returned his wife, with a kind smile. But she did not take back the suggestion.

The first thing on Mr. Fulton's programme for the next day was to write for the three hundred pounds.

"It should have been done yesterday," he said to himself, as he walked in the direction of his office, "and I wonder at myself for putting it off. If there should be a single interruption in the post, the money cannot arrive in time."

This thought did not make him very comfortable. The next thing on his programme was to make out a dozen bills, some of them pretty long, and the third thing was to see to their collection. A more prudent man would have seen that these accounts were all ready on the afternoon and evening before; but Mr. Fulton was not a prudent man.

It was so easy a thing to write the letter, which could be done at any time during the day, that Mr. Fulton passed this bit of work on his programme, and took up the more serious matter of drawing up the accounts he wished to collect. But it often happens that deferred work is best by all manner of hindrances.

His office was full of customers throughout the morning, and he was called from his desk every little while to attend to one thing and another not easily managed by his clerks.

One o'clock found him with not a single account ready. A sale was to be held at that hour, which he must attend. So he left things as they were, and went to the sale.

An hour and a half were spent there; at the close of which period, tired and hungry, he went to luncheon.

It was four o'clock when he got back to his office, where he found a gentleman waiting to see him on particular business, which would require him to go to a distant part of the town.

"Won't to-morrow do as well?" asked Mr. Fulton, thinking of the bills he had to make out.

"I shall leave town in the morning, and be gone for a week," answered the gentleman.

This settled the matter.

"You will have to work on these bills until I get back," said Mr. Fulton to his principal clerk; and he placed before him a memorandum of the accounts to be drawn up.

It was nearly six o'clock when Mr. Fulton returned. The evening had closed in—his clerks had already shut the office windows—two of them had gone home, and only one, his oldest clerk, remained waiting for him.

"How have you got on with the bills?" asked Mr. Fulton.

The clerk shook his head.

"I couldn't do anything," he replied. "There have been customers in ever since you left, and I had to attend to them."

"Can't you stay to-night?" asked Mr. Fulton.

"I would do so with pleasure, sir, but have an engagement that cannot be broken," replied the clerk.

"To-morrow evening I will remain."

"To-morrow evening will not do. The bills must be ready to-night, and I shall have to do the work," said Mr. Fulton.

The clerk retired, and Mr. Fulton went to his task in a hurried, nervous way. In half an hour he threw down his pen, exclaiming:

"It's no use—I am too tired. In the morning I will be fresh. If I come at seven I can get through by ten."

So he put up his books and papers, and went home. After tea he sat down to read.

"By George!" he suddenly exclaimed, striking his hand down upon a table by which he was sitting. It was eight o'clock.

"What's the matter?" asked his wife, looking up with surprise into his face, which was shadowed by an unpleasant thought.

"I've just thought of an important letter that should have been written to-day," he replied. "But no matter," he added, after a pause; "I can send a telegram to-morrow." And he resumed his book.

Instead of being at his office at seven o'clock on the next morning, he did not arrive there until nearly nine o'clock. He had still two days before him in which to get the thousand pounds, and did not feel much concern. A night's sleep had tranquilized his mind. After reading his letters and looking over the morning paper, he went to his account books again. Now, he had never liked this kind of work—it was always irksome to him, and it did not require many interruptions to cause its suspension again.

"John and I can make out all these bills to-night," he said to himself, "and they can be collected in a few hours to-morrow. So what's the use of worrying over them now?"

He laid down his pen, shut up his ledger and day-book, and put off this business to a more convenient season. The telegram was forgotten until as late as four o'clock, when it was sent off. That night all the accounts deemed available were drawn up. On the next morning Mr. Fulton did not feel a great deal better than on the day his note fell due. He was not quite so sure of getting the money promptly on his bills as he was when he engaged to return the thousand pounds to Mr. Hoffman. Of course—he took this assurance to himself as he went thoughtfully to his office—the three hundred pounds would come in answer to his telegram. But he found a letter, in answer thereto, saying that if his correspondent had received notice in the morning he could have made the desired remittance; but that, before the close of bank hours, he had disposed of all his available funds, and could not send a draft in less than a week, when Mr. Fulton might count on the money.

This was a damper indeed! The only dependence left was on collections and borrowing. In the latter expedient our young merchant had no faith. He had tried it to his heart's content three days before. So he hurried off one of his clerks with the accounts. Until twelve o'clock he waited anxious and nervous, before the clerk came back to make a report.

"What have you done?" asked Mr. Fulton, not able to repress his concern.

"Nothing at all," was the clerk's answer.

"What!"

Mr. Fulton became agitated.

"They all promised to settle in a few days, after the bills were examined," said the clerk.

"Did you see Jacobs?"

"Yes. He told me to leave the bill, and he would show it to his wife."

"And Wilkins?"

"Yes, sir. He will give me a cheque in two or three days."

"And Henry?"

"He will pay on Monday."

"Did you see A.H.?"

"Yes, sir. Every one."

"And no one paid?"

"None, sir."

Mr. Fulton turned to the desk, and the clerk went to one of the counters to attend to a customer. It was a moment of painful disappointment, not unmingled with self-condemnation. A feeble effort to borrow the sum required was next made; but nothing came of it. At two o'clock, Mr. Fulton entered Mr. Hoffman's counting-room, feeling badly enough. He was mortified as well as troubled. This failure on his part to make good the thousand pounds might put the kind-hearted merchant to serious trouble.

"My dear sir," he exclaimed, as he entered Mr. Hoffman's counting-house, "I hope it will make no difference to you about that thousand pounds. I have been sadly disappointed. But on next Monday you shall have it as surely as the day dawns."

The pleasant, welcoming smile faded out of the merchant's face.

"No," he answered, in a grave, quiet tone. "It will make no difference to me. I always keep a balance in bank. But, my young friend, it will make a difference to you, for I shall never lend you again. If you had been punctual to your promise, you might have called on me any time that you happened to need a few hundreds, or even a few thousands, and I would have accommodated you with pleasure. But this shuts you out from all favours here. No, Mr. Fulton, it makes no difference to me."

Our young friend went back very sober and very thoughtful. He had turned a new leaf in his book of life experiences, and the writings thereon set him to pondering his way.

"I am not walking safely," he said. "I may slip at

any moment and fall; and who shall help me to rise if I once go down? Not Mr. Hoffman, certainly; and yet he wished to be my friend."

A week afterwards he handed Mr. Hoffman a check for a thousand pounds, and said to him:

"Your rebuke was well-timed, sir. It was needed, and I shall profit thereby. I thank you for a double kindness. Yes, it will make a difference to me; the difference, I trust, between success and failure." And he went out before the merchant could reply.

Mr. Hoffman never helped our young friend with a loan of money again; but he had done him a higher service than if he had given him the widest range of favours in this direction. The rebuke so justly given made all the difference with Mr. Fulton that he had suggested: the difference between success and failure.

T. S. A.

ANECDOTES ON ENGLISH JUDGES.

LORD MANSFIELD, the prince of courtesy, was in the habit of reading newspapers, and answering letters in court; Lord Eldon did so too; and Lord Abinger would do it ostentatiously and offensively, to mark his contempt for the advocate. Lord Clare, who had a lifelong feud with Curran, beginning with a duel, once brought a Newfoundland dog into court, and gave his exclusive attention whilst Curran was speaking. The counsel paused. "Proceed Mr. Curran; pray proceed," said the Lord Chancellor, looking up, with his hand on the head of his canine companion. "I will proceed, my lord, when your lordships have concluded your consultation."

Anecdotes abound of Chief Justice Willes's gallantry, not to say profligacy, which we cannot venture to reproduce; and Boswell reports a conversation with Johnson, in 1773, which appears to have been suggested by some judicial irregularity. "On the same evening, he would not allow that the private life of a judge, in England, was required to be so strictly decorous as I supposed. 'Why, then, sir,' said I, 'according to your account, an English judge must live like a gentleman.' Johnson: 'Yes, sir, if he can.'"

When Lord Northampton (Healey) was Master of the Rolls, he requested leave of the king to discontinue the evening sitting of his court; and on being called on for a reason, replied, "Because, please your majesty, I am always drunk after dinner."

Within the memory of the senior members of the profession, the Court of Exchequer was stated to be composed of one judge, who was a gentleman and a lawyer; a second, who was a lawyer and no gentleman; a third, who was neither; and a fourth, who was both. This description, in which strict accuracy may have been sacrificed to antithesis, recalls Charles Lamb's jocular remark on his four friends of the Lake school—that one would tell a lie, but would not pick a pocket; another would pick a pocket, but would not tell a lie; a third would do neither; and a fourth would do both—selecting of course, the professed moralist for the climax.

The gentleman-judge, not a lawyer, was Baron Graham; and some curious stories are told of his uniform politeness on the bench. In his day, it was usual to suspend judgment in the criminal cases till the conclusion of the assizes, and deliver all the sentences in a lump. A name had been accidentally omitted in the list of capital punishments, of which he was reminded on coming to the end of the list. "Oh, yes, I see, John Thompson—John Thompson, I beg your pardon; you are also to be hanged by the neck till you are dead, and may the Lord have mercy on your miserable soul, too!"

Johnson records that, at the trial of Savage for murder, Page concluded an inflammatory address to the jury in this fashion:—"Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?"

IMPORTATION OF EGGS.—It is a startling fact, that in fourteen years the importation of eggs into this country has increased more than one hundred and sixty-nine millions. In 1848 there were imported 97,745,849, and in 1863, 266,929,680. The wholesale price in France is 6s. for ten dozen.

THE SWIMMING POWERS OF THE DOG.—A correspondent of the *Singleton Times* writes from the West as follows:—"Speaking of our late flood here, a remarkable instance of the distance a dog can swim took place under my own eye. On Saturday, the 13th instant,—the first day of the flood here,—as I stood on the top of my domicile, a dog belonging to Mr. Robinson, the lock-up keeper (one of my companions at the

(time), was carried away by the flood; we all saw it from the house top, and of course, after the flood, included it in the obituary of quadrupeds. He has been heard of again, at a station on the Brigale Creek. He must have swam forty miles before he made terra firma again; and must have been swimming all the remainder of that day and night, until Sunday evening, when he made the place above-mentioned."

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIX.

A STRANGE HONEYMOON.

Can I bless thee, my beloved,—can I bless thee?

What blessing word can I

From my own tears keep dry?

What flowers grow in my fields wherewith to dress thee?

My goods revert to ill,

My landings-up would break thee,

My crownings curse and kill—

Alas! I can but love thee:

May God bless thee, my beloved, may God bless thee.

Elizabeth B. Browning.

THE sound of Theodora's fall reached the ears of her doting husband, who was anxiously waiting in the hope that, when she had read Austin's letter, she would call to him. He raised her gently in his arms, and laid her down upon the sofa, calling loudly for assistance.

As he did so, though, his eyes searched eagerly around, and alighting upon the open letter lying upon the ground, he snatched it up and thrust it with trembling haste into his bosom.

Nelly, who entered the room in company with the breathless landlady, also looked about inquisitively for the letter, and eyed the fainting girl with a scarcely repressed smile, until a savage frown from Basil rendered her preternaturally serious.

A severe illness followed this event, and again Basil was Theodora's unwearied nurse. The first object that met her eyes on her returning consciousness was the pale, worn, anxious face of her lover-husband.

As she gazed upon him, she pitied him from her soul, and wondered much at the strange destiny that had inspired him with so absorbing a love for one who could never respond to it.

One day he said to her, producing Austin's letter: "I picked this up when you let it fall, dear Theodora. I need not tell you, though, that no eye save your own has seen its contents."

"I am certain of that," she said, after a momentary pause, looking very pale, and speaking in a low but firm voice. "Will you do me a favour Basil? Will you burn this letter and the other also?"

She gave him, as she spoke, the other letter that Austin had sent to her.

"It is unopened!" Basil exclaimed in surprise. "Yes," she answered; "it will remain so. It does not matter now what it contains. Will you burn it for me?"

Without a word, then, he took the two letters and threw them into the fire, and watched them until they were consumed to ashes, which fluttered and shivered and fell to pieces beneath his eyes. When he turned, however, to Theodora, he found her deadly pale, though calm. With the tears welling up into his eyes, he sank down by her side, kneeling, and half-embracing the back of the arm-chair in which she was seated, with the strange, beautiful blending of adoration and protection that distinguished his whole bearing towards her.

"Theodora," he said, in husky tones, "there is something that I have long wished to talk to you about. Dearest love, looking back upon all the circumstances of our marriage, I have been afraid that you were not a free agent when you gave me your hand. I have been afraid that you were acting under compulsion—"

He paused, but as she made no reply, went on:

"Dear Theodora, believe me that had I for an instant suspected that you had not been acting upon your own free will, I would have died a thousand deaths rather than have been concerned in such wickedness. Darling, tell me that you believe this of me!"

"Indeed I do believe it, Basil. I am certain that you did not join in the cruel deception."

"Deception?" he repeated.

"Yes. They dragged me, Basil, as well as I can comprehend the strange state of paralysis which crippled my intellect and my will. Then they dressed me and brought me down to you. It was my motive-power rather than my understanding that was affected; for I remember all, and can recall my feelings. I knew, or partly knew, what was going on around me, but it seemed to be a dream, from which I had not the power to arouse myself."

"I'll strangle the wretch who perpetrated this outrage," cried Basil, in a fury.

"Nay, nay, what I have told you was not intended to excite your wrath, but simply that you might know the facts; for little is left us to hope, but for perfect candour towards each other. Basil; I believe that you also were deceived."

"Deceived! They told me that you had accepted me. My too selfish love blinded me. I might have known they were playing some desperate game."

"They deceived themselves before they deceived us. They reasoned themselves into the belief that they were doing us a service, and that the end justified the means. They believed that the marriage was desirable. They had no time to combat what they thought to be fantastical objections. They determined to bring matters to a crisis by stratagem—they called it not treachery."

"But it was treachery—the blackest! the most atrocious. How can you forgive them, and seek to palliate their wickedness?"

"Because I must. The very instinct of self-preservation drives me to find excuses for them. It was too horrible—too agonizing to believe that they knew what they did, and yet could do it. Our Saviour on the cross, in his bitter agony, prayed for his executioners—Father forgive them, for they know not what they do! That they know not what they do, is the truth I think of most wrong doers. Loathe the sin as much as possible, yet judge mercifully of the sinner."

"Well," said Basil, after a pause, "let them pass for the present. Permit me, darling, to hold your dear hand a little, while I speak to you. It is so sweet to hold it, and I will never ask it again. This is what I feel bound to say to you—that wicked ceremony has given me no claim whatever to your confidence or affection, until your own words confirm it. A sort of right of guardianship, I must hold, or seem to hold, else you would have no protection until your friends return from abroad. Then Theodora you are the mistress of your own fate. An exposition of the treachery by which your consent seemed to be gained—a nine days' wonder—a legal formula, and you are free."

He spoke in a choking voice, pressing the hand that he thought in dropping then he was resigning for ever.

"And you, Basil?"

"Never mind me," he said, in husky tones.

The spring advanced, yet Theodora's friends came not back. Her life seemed ebbing. Like a young tree planted on ungenial soil, that cannot strike a root and grow, but droops and drops its leaves even in spring, so Theodora, rudely snatched from the dream life of her studies, and dropped down among the sternest realities of common place, drooped in spirit and body.

The delicate mind so sadly shocked trembled nearly into the chaos of insanity. But her sympathy and affections gushed forth towards others, making first bearable, then beautiful her life, for love creates beauty; goes forth blessing, and returns blessed. The sorrow of this worketh death. And had Theodora's heart been a selfish one, it must through its extreme tenderness have broken under such trials. But it was a loving heart and its sympathies went forth in kindness to all around her.

They did not remain much longer in Wales when Theodora's health allowed them to move. It was quite time that they returned home, for things were going on very badly at Red Ridge Farm. For some time past misfortunes had crowded upon them, and they were in the severest straits for a little money.

Poor Mrs. Wyld was growing old and feeble, and unable to look after her grandchild's interests.

It was high time that Basil took the reins in his hands.

He had hitherto neglected the serious business of life. He must buckle to now and work his hardest.

But, alas! what could his hard-work avail him now? No, they must sell the farm and go away to some distant part where they could manage to live upon their little means. And he must drag down Theodora with him as he fell—drag her down to sordid poverty.

One day when he was more depressed and down-hearted than ever, a letter came for him, accompanied by a large engrossed and folded paper of several pages.

He opened this with knitted brows, whilst Helen and Mrs. Wyld looked on in trembling alarm.

But when he had read a few words, his face flushed deeply, and then he covered his eyes with his hands, started up and left the table.

The women rose in dismay.

"What is it? For heaven's sake what has happened?"

The old woman asked in terror.

"See! see!" he cried in great excitement. "I married the girl and this is his revenge."

Helen grew very pale and grasped the back of the chair behind which she stood.

"Heaven help us!" cried the old lady. "He's of age now, and he's going to press us for the rent."

"Do you think that is it?" asked Basil.

"No," said Helen, paler than ever.

"Listen how vindictive he is!" said Basil.

"I would not have believed it of him," said the old woman, sobbing.

"Hear then," said Basil.

And he read aloud:—

"Hotel du Louvre.

"MY DEAR BASIL,—Receive the congratulations of a rejected suitor, but please only remember me as one who always has been, and ever will be, your own and Theodora's warm, well-wisher.

"As a testimonial of my earnest regard, will you accept the accompanying deed for the farm you occupy, which, had I been of legal age to convey it, would long since have been restored to you.—Yours ever sincerely,

"AUSTIN."

"That is Austin's revenge," said Basil, with a smile, and he handed them the deed.

"Heaven forgive me my evil thoughts of him," said the old lady.

Helen said nothing; she crept away, though fearful lest her brother's eyes should meet hers.

She crept away to her own room, and there flung herself upon her knees and sobbed. This woman was a riddle and a mystery. What did she want? Was she still hoping for Austin's love? And was it ever to be hers?"

And had Austin forgotten his love for Theodora, or would it revive when they met again?

"Poor fool!" she said, bitterly, as she thought of Basil. "Poor blind fool! He little dreams that this gift may mean treachery."

CHAPTER XX.

THE FATAL TRUST.

'Tis dawn; a child hath seen the light;

But for the lady, fair and bright,

She slumbers in eternal night.

Anonymous.

DOCTOR WYNE was not destined to hear the secret from the lips of his patient, for when she was in the very act of opening her lips to impart it to him, the other lady came forward and interrupted them.

The doctor, however, determined that he would, if possible, seize upon an opportunity before long of speaking to the young girl alone; and, in the meantime, he narrowly scrutinized the demeanour of her companion, whose every look and action filled him with dread.

"I have some experience in young children, and I think that child does not seem likely to live," she said, in a cold tone.

The doctor looked up into those cold, cruel, dark, green eyes, and at those firmly-set thin lips, and he shared the terrible suspicions of the young mother. After a pause, he laid his hand impressively upon her wrist, and drew her away to a distant corner.

"Madam," he said, "when I told you that my professional oath bound me to keep the secrets of families, I also warned you that it would not cover criminal cases."

"What do you mean?" she asked, in a hoarse whisper.

"I mean, madam, that when called upon to give evidence in a court of justice, a doctor must even reveal the secrets of families."

The lady's face blanched.

Then their eyes met in mutual defiance—but with a difference; for the lady's defiance was fierce, the doctor's firm.

"Madam," he said, in low but solemn tones, "it is as painful for me to speak these words as for you to hear them; but I am forced to do so, since I cannot become the accomplice of a crime. I must save you from a deadly sin, and the child from an unnatural death."

She turned away her head.

Oh, if Hugh Wyne could have seen the fell hatred that darkened her face in that instant. It was gone when she turned again towards him, with a look of appeal.

"Good heavens, what shall I do? Doctor, you bitterly wrong me by your suspicions; but there are times when women lose their senses, I think. And such a time has come to me, and it inspires you with these fears. They are groundless—but listen. There are but three persons in the world who know of the existence of this wretched babe. And these three, doctor, are you, myself, and that unhappy girl. Neither of us are likely to reveal the secret. You are bound by your professional oath; we by regard for our family honour. But if we keep this miserable babe on the premises, we cannot guard the secret of its birth from the knowledge of the servants. Oh, doctor, in pity's sake, do not accuse a distracted woman, but assist her, if it lies in your power."

"Why," he asked, after a pause, "should the honour of the family be concerned in the concealment of the birth of this child when the young lady is a wife?"

"A wife, poor fool; so she says. She might say, with more truth, that she is a fool. She was the dupe of a designing villain, who deserted her, and this is the end."

At this moment moans from the bed attracted their attention. The doctor went towards his patient. The lady followed him, for she seemed determined not to permit a word of confidential conversation between them.

The young girl, however, did not seem to notice her presence, and stretching out her hand towards the doctor, she murmured, in a low, plaintive voice:

"Oh, doctor, will you take my babe into your care? Take her with you—I cannot guard her always. I might fall asleep, and—"

She paused and shuddered.

"Oh doctor, take her out of harm's way," the young mother continued; "take her! It will not be for long. My husband will return. He is good and true and noble. He will not desert me thus. He will come and claim his wife and child."

"Gladdy, cease this raving!" interrupted the lady, fiercely.

"It is truth."

"Silence! You have no husband."

"Oh, sir," continued the young lady, "you will take charge of my baby a little while, until my husband comes back? Then he will take care of his wife and child—for we are his wife and child in the sight of heaven."

"His dupe and dishonour!" murmured the elder lady, and then turning to the doctor, she said, "If you feel inclined to embarrass yourself with this wretched child, I will willingly repay you. The girl's fears for the safety of the babe are as absurd as yours. But her decision is a prudent one. It is necessary, not for the child's safety, but for the erring mother's sake, that it should be removed from the house. If you are willing to take charge of it and put it out to nurse, you may name any sum you please for its annual support, and I will double the amount and pay in advance. What do you say?"

The doctor hesitated. The request seemed such an extraordinary one. The eyes of the elder lady and those of the younger were turned towards him—those of the former inquiringly; the latter's imploringly. He did believe that the infant's safety as well as the mother's reputation depended upon the decision he made, and suddenly looking up, he said:

"I will take charge of the child."

The younger lady grasped his hand in passionate gratitude.

The elder said:

"And you will keep our secret?"

"I will."

"Now," said the lady, somewhat abruptly, "name your terms. Name liberal terms, for they cannot exceed my will or ability to meet them."

Again the doctor paused.

"You do not speak!" said she.

But he was thinking:

"Could this be some plot? Was the young mother a party to it?"

"You do not speak!" repeated the lady.

"That is an after consideration."

"Well, but why not now?"

"Shall I not see my patient again?"

"If necessary."

He went to his medicine-chest for a soothing draught, which he administered to the young lady.

Then he took his seat by the bedside, bidding her compose herself.

He had sat thus only a few minutes when a hand was laid upon his arm.

He started and looked up.

It was the other lady.

"Time is growing short," she said.

"Yes; I am almost ready."

"You must go before it grows light."

"I only waited for the mother to fall into perfect sleep, which is necessary for her safety."

"Now you can take the child away."

"Yes; it is better that there should be no leaving-taking. Tell her that it shall be well cared for."

"She will feel satisfied for its safety now," said the lady, with an evil smile.

"And I also!"

"You are both mad."

The doctor looked at her calmly, and her eyes fell beneath his steadfast gaze.

He thought it was a wicked face, for all its beauty. A cruel face.

A devilish face.

"It is nearly daylight," said the elder lady, impatiently; "it is time that you went away again."

"I am ready to go."

The young mother was in a deep, deep sleep. The other lady stealthily opened the bedroom-door and beckoned him to follow.

"I must have something warm for the child," he said, hesitating.

She frowned with annoyance, and then going to a wardrobe, took out a fine white woollen shawl and gave it to him.

Very impatient she seemed while he carefully wrapped up the child, and before he had well finished, she opened the door again and led the way.

He followed very cautiously down the dark passages and staircases to the outer door, which she proceeded to unfasten.

"One moment," said the doctor, "I ought to see my patient again to-morrow. How is it to be managed?"

"I will send for you."

"When?"

"At midnight."

She opened the door and let him out. The day had not yet dawned, but the storm had ceased.

The deaf and dumb man was waiting on the outside to conduct him to the carriage, and the doctor followed him.

He found the vehicle standing in the wood where it had been left. The mute took the cloths from the horses and opened the door. The doctor entered. The coachman mounted the box, and the carriage drove off.

Just as day was dawning they rolled into the streets of the village, where even the earliest inhabitants were yet in bed.

The doctor alighted at his door, bringing out the babe with him, and at the same moment the mute coachman put whip to his horses, and dashing down the hillside, was almost instantaneously lost to sight.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WARNING CRY.

What was that voice in the night? Müller.

As the doctor entered his house on tip-toe, he fancied he heard a slight sound in the room above. It was the faint cough with which his ailing wife usually awoke.

He carried the babe in his arms, walked straight to the bed side, and laid it down beside her.

"Hugh, what is this?" she exclaimed, in unbounded astonishment, shrinking away from the baby and gazing upon it.

"It is a poor, forsaken child, of which I have taken charge for the present, Amy," he answered gravely.

"A foundling, Hugh?"

"Not exactly, Amy. But a child that—thine—"

"That what?"

The doctor stammered.

"Is it a secret?"

"You know, my dear, that doctors, in the course of their professional practice, sometimes fall in with strange family mysteries."

"And this is one?"

"Yes."

"Tell me all about it, then," said the lady.

"My dearest Amy, if I knew anything very definite, I should be bound in honour not to divulge it, even to you, love; for you are aware of the nature of a doctor's oath, not to divulge the secrets of families; but in point of fact, I have been entrusted with no secret as yet, and I wish to consult with you upon what little I do know."

Amy listened to the story which he now told her, with the deepest interest and attention.

"Poor little helpless babe," she murmured, as the tears welled up into her eyes.

"I knew you would pity it," he said.

"Do you believe the mother is married, Hugh?"

"I believe she *thinks* she is."

"And their names?"

"Ah! that is the question."

"And you do not know?"

"No."

"You did not hear?"

"No."

"And have you no idea where the house is?"

"None."

"But which way did you go?"

"The carriage left the village by the west road, and went through Elton Wood, as well as I could judge; but it went by a circuitous route, and stopped in the centre of another wood, where this house seemed hidden away."

"What kind of house?"

"A large white house, with many windows, and one central hall door, approached by stone steps. That was all I could see by the single flash of lightning, that revealed it to me just as I entered."

"So many houses in the neighbourhood are like that."

"Yes. I noticed some small details of the interior though, which I wish you would try and remember."

"What were they?"

"The elder lady, let me tell you first, is tall and handsome; black hair, high forehead, and sharp nose, pointed chin, and dark-greenish eyes."

"Terrible! Do you call that handsome?"

"It does not seem so in the description; but she is handsome for all that. Her features are delicate and regular, and her complexion fair and clear. Remember the description."

"I shall not forget it. Thin lips, sharp nose, green eyes. The old cat!"

"The younger lady is a perfect little beauty, with jet black hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes; large, soft, dark eyes; little straight nose; red pouting lips and round chin; faultlessly modelled form; complexion deadly pale from illness, but no doubt of a rich peachy bloom in health."

"The little darling! I shall know her the moment I set eyes on her."

"The room in which I found her was furnished with gold-coloured furniture and hangings. Remember all these things in connection with the fact of the deaf and dumb messenger, and you will be in possession of all the particulars which may—which may—"

"What makes you pause, dear Hugh?"

"Nothing," he replied, with a sigh; at the same time that a dark shadow crossed his face.

Was he thinking that some danger might arise from this mysterious adventure? That something might happen to him?

It was very certain that he kept a secret from her.

The day passed slowly, and somehow a gathering uneasiness took possession of Amy's heart.

As the hour approached when Doctor Wynne expected a visit from the mute, he persuaded her to seek her couch.

"Good night, dearest! kiss me!" she said, rising.

"Why, Amy, love, what is the matter?" he asked, as he pressed her to his heart for a moment.

"Nothing!"

"Nothing?"

"I don't know."

"Yes, you do, Amy."

"I am wretched then," she said.

And she burst into tears.

Now he had to kiss and soothe her.

"You are very nervous to-night, my love."

Amy wept.

"There, dearest," he said, tenderly, "go to bed and compose yourself."

Amy returned the kiss that he had pressed on her lips, and said:

"I know it is only nervousness makes me cry, but I cannot help it, Hugh. You are very patient with me."

"I should be a very bad husband if I were not patient with you, Amy; and a very stupid doctor if I were not patient with all women."

She dried her eyes and went up-stairs and heard her own child say his prayers, and then went to bed, and gathered the poor little homeless babe to her bosom as tenderly as though it had been a child of her own.

But she did not—could not sleep.

There was an awful weight upon her heart which she could neither understand nor overcome. It held her wakeful—watchful—anxious.

Her senses were preternaturally acute. She heard every movement, however slight, in the room below.

She even heard the leaves rattle as the doctor turned the pages of the book he was reading, so death-like was the silence.

For nearly two hours, then, did she lie thus, with wide-opened eyes and strained ears, watching and listening—watching and listening in the pitchy darkness and tomb-like silence.

At length there was a sound without.

She heard the approach of horses' hoofs.

She listened and held her breath.

The sound stopped before the street-door.

The bell rang.

The doctor arose and admitted some one whose entrance was followed by no conversation.

There were muffled movements though below, as of several footsteps.

"It is some one for medicine," Amy thought to herself, "but how silent they are!"

Whilst she was thus thinking, though, the doctor left the house with the messenger.

He had brought no carriage this time, but a couple of horses. One of these the doctor mounted, and they rode away together.

As the sound of the horses' hoofs retreating in the distance struck upon her ears, Amy started up in bed with a half suppressed scream.

"And he goes then? Where? Was anything going to happen to him?"

"Where had he gone? It could only be to the house of the mysterious lady with green eyes, for the doctor would scarcely have gone anywhere else when expecting a summons from her, and they must have sent a saddle horse instead of a carriage as a precautionary measure, lest the first night out of the carriage might have been observed, and the second might excite conjecture."

Somehow the circumstances of the case filled her with a dread for which she could not account.

Truthful and confiding in the extreme, a mystery at any time was hateful to her.

Her spirits were weighed down by a dead burden that she could neither understand nor throw off.

"Heaven help my darling! I wish that this weary night were over, and that he would return to me," she sighed.

She strove in vain to sleep. She strove in vain to pray.

She could only be broad awake in the darkness, silence, and uncertainty; and watch, and listen, and dread.

It was now far past midnight. The house within, the village without, were silent as the grave.

The world seemed blind to light, and deaf to sound; but the stiller and darker it grew, the wider and wider glared Amy's eyes in her intense and painful vigilance.

But in vain she waited, in vain she watched.

He was doomed never to return.

"Oh, that this awful night would end! Oh, that my darling would return!"

Hour after hour of horrible supernatural terror and suspense crept painfully on.

Out of this death of silence and darkness there suddenly broke upon the startled air a cry.

A wild cry—a moaning, plaintive cry—terrible, thrilling, never to be forgotten.

"Oh, Amy!—my wife!—Amy!"

It was her husband's voice—a wild, eldritch cry, but yet the voice of Hugh Wynne—unmistakably his.

Amy sat up in bed, trembling violently.

She sat motionless, holding her breath—listening; but the sound was not repeated.

Silence and darkness swallowed up all life as in death again.

Then, still trembling through all her frame, she arose and struck a light.

With a trembling hand she opened the bedroom window, and peered with a ghastly face out into the village street.

Silent and deserted.

She closed the window, and slowly descended the stairs into the little parlour.

There there was a death-like silence.

She looked up at the clock over the mantle-piece.

It had stopped at five minutes to four.

Day was breaking faintly among the hills. A faint streak of greyish light stole in upon her through the window blind.

She went to the street-door. It was fastened only by the latch-lock. The doctor had not yet returned.

In terror, Amy asked herself a question—

"Was I asleep?"

But no, she could not believe it.

"Was I asleep, and heard that dreadful cry only in my dreams?"

But the answer came from her perfect consciousness—she had not slept a moment—she had not even closed her eyes.

Shuddering, though it was a summer's morning, she crept back into the gloomy house, looking on all sides with scared eyes in search of some nameless horror she expected to see.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CRIME.

Who struck the blow? Didst see?

Old Play.

AND all this time what had become of the husband for whom Amy waited so anxiously?

Had any evil befallen him?

It is necessary that we follow in his footsteps to see.

A horrible tragedy is close at hand, and if we must learn who is the perpetrator of the crime, we must be patient and wait, and begin at the beginning.

When Amy left her husband and went up-stairs to bed, the doctor remained with his books, and endeavoured to devote himself to his medical studies.

He was, however, in such a strange state of nervous excitement, that he found it to be perfectly impossible to concentrate his attention upon the work before him.

As the clock upon the mantel-piece chimed the midnight hour, he arose from the table and laid aside his books.

"I wonder whether they will send for me?" he said.

"I will wait half-an-hour and no longer. If the messenger does not come at the end of that time I will retire to rest."

Scarcely, however, had the doctor arrived at this conclusion, than there came a ring at the night-bell.

The doctor opened the door.

"I thought that you were not coming!" he involuntarily exclaimed; for at that moment he had forgotten

the incapacity of the deaf and dumb man who stood before him.

Recollecting himself, however, he signed to the man to enter while he prepared himself for the journey; and when he was ready they went out together, and found two saddle-horses waiting for them.

The doctor was somewhat surprised at this; but as there were no means of learning from his companion why the change of conveyance had been made, he mounted his horse, and they rode away in silence.

The mute led the way. The doctor followed.

It was a clear, starlight night, and Doctor Wynne was determined upon this occasion that he would closely observe the road, and so discover and identify the strange house to which upon the previous night he had paid so mysterious a visit.

They passed along the village street, and over a wide heath which lay beyond. They rode on then through several winding lanes with which the doctor was not acquainted, and came at last to a wood.

He knew they were going in a north-westerly direction at first, or he fancied they were; but presently he began to lose his reckoning.

As they proceeded, the wood grew thicker and thicker. When they had ridden about a mile, the mute suddenly turned into a bridle-path on the right-hand side of the road.

The doctor followed, and still the shades of the forest grew darker and darker with the thickly clustering foliage.

The path was difficult and dangerous.

Every minute the riders were obliged to put out their arms to force aside the obstructions, branches of the trees that crossed their path, or hung low over their heads. It was circuitous, too, for the doctor being unable to take an observation from the stars that were concealed from his view by the close canopy of leaves over his head, soon, as I have said, lost his reckoning, and could only guess in a general way that their course lay north-westerly.

After they had continued their journey for about an hour, however, they came to a stone wall enclosing some shrubberies.

It was not very difficult for the doctor to recognise this land-mark.

It was the same wall he had seen last night, and they presently came to the door through which they then had passed.

The mute alighted and signed for the doctor to imitate him.

Then, Doctor Wynne having complied, the mute secured the two horses and opened the gate for them to pass through into the garden beyond.

When they had done so the doctor found himself upon the scene of the previous night, now plainly visible in the moonlight.

He found himself on a neglected piece of ground, half shrubbery, half garden; a confusion of trees, bushes, and shrubs, grass-grown paths, and weedy flower beds. In the distance through the trees he could catch a glimpse of a great white house.

They walked on, and presently found themselves before a flight of stone steps leading under a quaintly fashioned stone portico to a massive oaken door.

On the previous dark and stormy night these details had escaped the doctor's notice, but now they impressed themselves forcibly upon his mind.

He felt certain that the mute had brought him there by a roundabout route to reach the house, and that the family within would mystify him as much as possible.

All was dark and still. There was no sign of life or light within or around the house.

The mute knocked softly.

The door was opened silently.

A hand stretched forth, seized the doctor's wrist and drew him in.

Then the door was closed again, and bolted, and the strange lady, for of course it was she who had admitted him, whispered:

"Follow me!"

He obeyed in silence.

She led him up the same way that he had gone the previous night, opened the same door, and admitted him to the same bed-room.

It was dimly lighted, as before.

The doctor went at once to the bedside, to look at his patient, whom he found laying awake, motionless, and waiting for him.

"Well, doctor," she said, "how is my babe?"

She spoke in an anxious tone.

He replied soothingly:

"It is quite well, my dear young lady. And you?"

"Nothing ails me. But—but I am very unhappy."

"Your unhappiness you have caused yourself," said the grim woman by the bedside.

The doctor cast upon her a reproving glance, and turned again to his patient.

"My dear young lady, look away from the dark, and

towards the bright side of your life. Look forward for the return of your husband, and the possession of your child and domestic love and happiness."

The other lady laughed bitterly.

"Her husband," she said. "What husband, doctor?"

The doctor, however, did not make any reply; did not seem to hear, for he was bending over the young mother, and listening to a question she was asking him.

"Is my child with you, doctor?"

"Yes, my dear young lady, my wife is taking charge of her, and she could not be in better hands."

"Heaven bless you, dear doctor," she murmured.

After a few seconds, she added:

"You will learn all about me soon, doctor; and learn that I am blameless. In the meanwhile, I cannot bear that so good a man as you are should think ill of me for a moment."

"I do not, my dear child—I do not," said the doctor, earnestly.

"I am very young, I know," she continued; "scarcely past childhood; but oh, doctor, I am a good girl, indeed I am. I mean"—she explained with a smile and a blush—"I am an honourable wife and mother. I have done no wrong—no act of disobedience to my parents, doctor. Indeed I have not."

The doctor was surprised and staggered. He had supposed that the girl had run away to get married, and thus involved herself in trouble.

But now she declared that she had committed no wrong, not even an act of disobedience; and when he looked into her face he believed her words, and told her so.

"Are you deceived or deceiving?" sarcastically inquired the lady.

"Neither. Oh, you know that. I am neither the one nor the other," the girl cried eagerly.

"Doctor, if your patient requires no further medical treatment, I think you had better retire with me. I have a matter of business to settle with you," said the lady.

Doctor Wynne secretly agreed with her, so far as that he was anxious to return home and end the suspense of his wife, who—some rare instinct warned him—was not sleeping, but painfully watching for him to come home again.

Before he went, however, he stooped over the bed and said:

"I am going now. Try and compose yourself to sleep, my dear young lady, and upon no account be uneasy respecting your little one, who shall be tenderly cared for, and watched over until she is restored to you again."

"Heaven bless you for that assurance," murmured the young girl. "Your words have taken a heavy load off my heart."

Then, as she spoke, she pressed his hand to her lips and kissed it gratefully.

He could not tear himself away, but lingered until her hold relaxed; then he followed the other lady from the room.

She led him into an adjoining apartment—dark and solemn—and furnished as a sort of sitting-room.

When she had placed the light, which she carried, upon the table, she produced from a heavy oaken cabinet a pocket book containing a roll of bank notes. Placing the notes in the doctor's hands, she said:

"Here are fifty pounds. At the end of three months I will pay you another fifty. Will that satisfy you?"

"Two hundred pounds a year?" cried the doctor, in surprise. "Half that amount would be much more than is sufficient."

"I have no doubt of it. I should, however, prefer to pay you at that rate."

"I am poor, madam, and cannot refuse, for my wife and child's sake. Shall I give you a receipt, madam?"

The lady smiled.

"What makes you ask that?"

"What makes me ask?"

"Yes."

"Is it not natural?"

"It is ingenious."

"In what way?"

"I do not choose to give you my name. That is all. And let me warn you against endeavouring to learn it at any future time."

The doctor smiled in his turn.

"I shall not attempt to pry unfairly into your secrets, but it is impossible that I can always remain in ignorance of the name of the family and the situation of this house."

"You think so?" she said, with peculiar significance.

"How can I think otherwise?"

"Well, we shall see."

"You had perhaps, therefore, better trust me wholly, as you have trusted me in part."

"Allow me to use my own judgment in that particular. I do not fear your being able to learn more than I wish you to know."

"We shall see, madam."

"Yes, we shall see."
And she opened the door for him to depart.
"Am I to come again to-morrow?" he asked.
"Is it necessary?"
"I think so."
"Certainly you shall, then; I will send for you."
"I have a horse of my own."
"I will send the guide, then."
"I shall not require him, I think. The road was circuitous; but I can find it again, I have little doubt."
The lady's eyes were fixed upon him with an evil glare.
"You mean what you say?" she asked.
"Yes."
"You think, then, that you hold the clue in your hand?"
"Yes."
"And you mean to follow it up?"
"If I can."
"If you dare!"

There was a terrible expression upon her face as she spoke, before which, in spite of himself, the doctor slightly trembled.
"They then slowly descended the stairs.
When they reached the door, she cautiously opened it for him, allowed him to pass through, and closed it noiselessly behind him.

The mute was waiting with the horses, and they were soon upon their way again.
As they rode along, the doctor was very thoughtful. He was turning over in his mind the extraordinary events of the previous night.

"If I had not taken charge of that poor babe," he thought, "that green-eyed monster would certainly have destroyed it."

It was very strange. She seemed anxious for the life of the mother, and for the death of the poor babe.

Yet she seemed to hate the mother also.
Why, then, was she anxious to preserve her life?
It was darkly mysterious.

As he rode along, it seemed to him that the pathway was more difficult to traverse than it had been when he came by it an hour or so ago.

He was fully occupied now in thrusting aside the branches of the trees which blocked up the way, and he was obliged to go very slowly.

Suddenly it occurred to him to look round for his companion, who a short time previously had fallen into the rear.

He pulled up his horse and gazed around in amazement.

The mute had disappeared.
What was to be done? What had become of his guide?

There was no use in shouting, he could not hear. The only course open to the doctor was to wait for him to come of his own good will.

"He's gone to sleep," said the doctor to himself; "and no wonder. I am sure I could do so. I'm nearly dead beat."

But it would not do to go to sleep in the wood, and he would soon be at home again, if the mute only showed up.

The doctor listened. He could not hear the slightest sound. He thought that he might have heard the breaking of the branches in the distance.

But no, all was still as the grave.

The doctor began to feel a little uneasy.

Could this be accidental or intentional? He could hardly believe the former.

He thought that he had better get out of the wood with as little delay as possible. Somehow it struck him that he would be much safer in the carriage-road.

He came out in the road very shortly, felt more at his ease, and breathed more freely, although the trees here also met above his head, and made the path before him very dark.

"He must have given me the slip, and gone home again," the doctor thought. "But what a fine clue the horse will be to his mistress's name and whereabouts."

Just as this thought occurred to him, something happened which filled him with alarm.

Suddenly he heard the brushwood on the right side of the road crackle beneath the tread of a stealthy foot.

He stared eagerly in the direction whence the sound proceeded.

Nothing was to be seen, but yet the crackling sound continued.

What was it? It could not be a fox or a dog. It could not be a quadruped.

No, it was the footstep of a man, cautiously creeping along, and crunching down the dried leaves and twigs of the undergrowth.

It was the stealthy step of a powerful man, hiding himself in the bushes.

Not far from the village where the doctor resided, there was a large goal, from which lately some of the

convicts had escaped, who, with amazing cunning, had successfully eluded all pursuit, but had shown that they existed by the perpetration of horrible crimes, murder, robbery, arson—in a word, they had committed the most appalling outrages upon unarmed travellers, isolated houses, and unprotected women.

A short time before this a pedlar had been murdered by these ruffians, and although high rewards had been offered for the capture of the murderers, they had not been discovered.

The doctor thought of this as he slowly ambled on. He gazed about him in expectant alarm.

He was unarmed and alone.

His horse was very slow; indeed, slightly lame.

As he rode on he listened, and kept his eyes fixed upon the thicket.

Suddenly the moon revealed to him a glimpse of a dark face.

Then the glitter of a gun barrel.

It protruded through the leaves. It was pointed towards him.

His blood froze at the sight, but he wheeled his horse round to face the danger.

To face it—but not to escape it.

No, escape was impossible. He was doomed.

The murderer took a deadly aim.

The gun pointed towards his heart, and belched forth fire and smoke.

Then there was the sound of a horse's hoofs retreating rapidly.

Then the crackling of dry branches beneath the murderer's feet.

The moon hid itself behind the clouds, the wood was plunged into a pitch darkness, and something stiff and stark and ghastly lay among the rank grass, bathed in blood.

(To be continued.)

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewit," "The Pretate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER CIII.

Hast thou no pity—no remorse? Have all
The avenues of mercy been so closed
That not one prayer can reach thee? Old Play.

For several days Dr. Briard was busily occupied in his laboratory—or rather the library—for the room was appropriated to the double purpose of study and manipulation by its clever but unprincipled occupant. Athalie was his frequent visitor. With untiring patience she watched the tedious process of preparing the infernal beverage which was to rid her of her fears, and work out the most diabolical scheme of revenge ever engendered in the brain of a vindictive woman.

"I don't know what my lord can be thinking of!" observed the housekeeper, on the second day of these operations; "the stench is terrible! They had better turn Moretown Abbey into a chemist's shop at once! I should not wonder if we are all burnt in our beds! Such fires night and day!"

The nurse, who was present, inquired what the speaker meant.

"What do I mean?" repeated the irascible old lady. "Why I mean that the library is a disgrace to the mansion of any nobleman; the nasty Frenchman has had a thing like a cook's stove built in the chimney of the room. The smoke I am sure is enough to suffocate any one; yet there sits ma'mselle hour after hour, watching his proceedings as earnestly as if he were making diamonds and gold, instead of washes and drugs!"

The inquirer shuddered: she well knew what kind of washes the charlatan was preparing.

"There can be little fear of fire!" she observed.

"Can't there!" said the butler: "you should see the quantity of coals and wood he consumes! However, there is one comfort," he added; "the library is separated from the rest of the house by the great hall, and that is of stone; so that if it is burnt down he will destroy only himself!"

Mrs. Brooks left the servants' hall without making any further remarks or inquiries.

"She will repeat every word you have uttered to the governess!" observed one of the housemaids, looking after her.

"Let her!" exclaimed both the housekeeper and butler at once: "it is only fit that my lord should know of these goings on!"

Old James, who was present, shook his head: from many causes he suspected that his infatuated master was but too well acquainted with them.

Strange to say, the forebodings of the housekeeper proved true, for in the middle of the night an alarm of fire was given—it was in the library. One of the keepers first made the discovery. He saw the flames issuing from the windows of the room.

Lord Moretown, the doctor, Athalie, and the servants were speedily dressed, and in the great hall.

"The countess, my lord!" exclaimed one of the men, as his master made his appearance.

"There is not the slightest occasion to disturb her," said his lordship. "Her apartments are in the opposite wing: there is no danger of the fire communicating."

The charlatan made several desperate attempts to enter the room, but each time was driven back by the flames. In his agony, he proffered a large sum of money to anyone who would save a small cabinet, which he described, from the devouring element; but no one felt reckless enough of life to tempt the risk.

"I fear you must wait till the arrival of assistance from Fulton!" said the earl; "messengers have been sent."

"Assistance!" repeated the old man, wringing his hands; "I shall be ruined! My cabinet—my cabinet!" and he not only repeated the offer, but doubled the amount of the promised recompense.

"What does it contain?" whispered the governess.

"Papers!" he replied. Then struck by a sudden suspicion, he added, "Traitor! 'tis you who have done this! No one had an interest in destroying them but you! But I'll be revenged—I'll—"

"Fool!" muttered his wife between her teeth; "would you expose yourself before these menials? Did I know where the documents you allude to were concealed? Had I done so, I could have obtained them by less desperate means!"

This observation, although it satisfied the doctor that she was guiltless of any share in his misfortune, by no means lessened his desire to obtain possession of the papers. From time to time he asked if the engine had arrived from Fulton, and kept repeating to himself—

"It will be burnt—it will be burnt!"

The nurse was the last person in the household to make her appearance in this scene of confusion—a circumstance by no means remarkable, when it is remembered that her apartments, as well as those of her patient, were in the opposite wing. She was extremely pale, and only partially attired.

"Imprudent!" exclaimed Athalie, the instant she beheld her. "Why did you leave the countess?"

The woman uttered a few words respecting her terror and her danger.

"Return! Should she escape—!" added her employer, in a still lower tone of voice.

Mrs. Brooks showed the key which she held in her hand; and the governess, perfectly reassured as to the safety of her victim, permitted her to remain.

"I told you what it would come to!" said the housekeeper to the nurse; "the library was not a fit place for such doings!"

"What doings?" inquired the earl, who overheard the observation of the domestic.

The late operations of Dr. Briard were explained to him.

"I wish, sir," said the peer, whose manner betrayed the annoyance he felt, "that you had chosen some more fitting place for scientific pursuits. You see the result of your indiscretion."

"My lord," replied the old man, "the fault is none of mine. I carefully extinguished the fires before I left the room. I appeal to mademoiselle if such is not the case."

"Certainly!" exclaimed the Frenchwoman; "I was present, and saw you!"

This was sufficient. The noble owner of Moretown Abbey did not dare to dispute any statement guaranteed by the word of Athalie.

The anxiously expected assistance at last arrived from Fulton, and after an hour's exertion the fire was extinguished; but the library, with its valuable contents, was completely destroyed.

The charlatan was the first to enter the room—but too late to save the treasure for the safety of which he had evinced so much anxiety. Not a vestige of the little cabinet remained; even the silver clasps and mouldings had been melted. At least, such was the conclusion, for no trace could be discovered of them.

"I must speak with you in the morning!" he whispered in the ear of his wife, as he emerged from the still smouldering ruins, half blinded by the smoke and soot.

"Is it possible," she said, "that you still suspect me?"

"No," replied the charlatan; "but still I must see you: the cabinet is gone!"

"Destroyed, I suppose you mean?"

"Gone!" he repeated, yet more emphatically. "I have discovered fragments of the card table upon which it stood, but not a vestige of the repository I sought: yet it was clasped with metal, and both handle and lock were of massive silver!"

The governess reflected for an instant on receiving this extraordinary intelligence; and, struck by a sudden idea, demanded what the cabinet had contained.

"The certificate of our marriage!" was the reply; "and all your letters written in France!"

The guilty woman clasped her hands, and staggered rather than walked back to her chamber.

The servants and the firemen remained to watch the still smoking ruins of the apartments during the rest of the night.

Before a thing was touched, Athalie and Dr. Briard descended the following morning to the library: both were haunted by guilty fears. The possibility that the proofs of their past crimes had fallen into the hands of their enemies alarmed them; even the conviction that such was the case appeared better than the corroding doubt. They directed the mass of ashes to be carefully sifted, and stood by the while to watch the process, in silent expectation.

After some time, a fused mass of metal was discovered. The charlatan seized upon it eagerly: a brief examination convinced him that it was silver. The governess began to breathe freely.

At last one of the handles of the missing cabinet was discovered among the ashes, only partially melted. There was no mistaking the cunning workmanship of the artist who had graven the delicate figures which ornamented it—and a weight was removed from their hearts.

"You see," said the woman, who was the first to recover her self-possession, "how groundless were your fears."

"I confess that they made me suspicious!" was the reply.

"And unjust!" added his wife.

"And unjust!" repeated the old man; "that is," he continued, "if you still adhere to the compact we so lately made. Should you withdraw from it, I shall not know what to think: the destruction of the papers would answer your purpose better even than their abstraction!"

"Perform your share of it," replied Athalie, "and fear not that I will fail in mine! This accident is most unfortunate: it will destroy the completion of our plans!"

"Not so!" said the man of science. "Fortunately I had removed the results of my labour to my own room. The draught is ready, and to-morrow, at the latest, we may commence."

His confederate listened to the intelligence with a smile of fiend-like satisfaction. It was so many days of delay and doubt removed from her heart. There is nothing so relentless as hate: even love is patient in comparison to it.

Three days afterwards, when the nurse made her report as to the health of the countess, she stated that a sudden change appeared to have fallen upon her charge—that she was no longer anxious for books—but had fallen into a state of apathy from which it was difficult to rouse her.

"It works!" thought the governess, with secret satisfaction; "it works as I could wish!"

"Her whole manner appears so changed," continued the speaker, "that the earl had better be informed!"

"Not a word!" exclaimed her employer, hastily; "you are here to obey my orders—not to judge of what is right to be done or left undone! His lordship is too much harassed already to be troubled with any change in a mad woman's phantasy!"

Mrs. Brooks replied only by a look of submission.

"I should not be surprised," continued the governess, with an air of confidence, "if the change you have remarked proves the forerunner of the last stage of her unfortunate malady! The medical men who saw her in town hinted that it was probable such would be the case!"

"And what did they say the last stage would be, mademoiselle?" respectfully inquired the nurse.

"Idiotcy!" was the governess's contemptuous reply. "You shudder!" she added, eyeing her agent suspiciously.

"Would you not do the same?" asked the woman, meekly. "It is a fearful thing to pass the long hours of the day, and the still more lonely ones of night, with a being utterly lost to reason! I have not the nerves I once possessed—solitude and suffering have shattered them! Should she prove violent, separated as we are from rest of the inmates of the abbey! Oh, it is terrible to think upon!"

So well acted were the fears of the speaker, and so natural did they appear, that even the lynx-eyed Athalie was for once deceived. How was it possible for her to suspect that the being she had snatched from beggary—whose life was at her mercy—would plot to deceive her?

"The task is disagreeable enough, doubtless," she said; "but it must be performed. Should the disease develop itself as I suspect it will, your duty may be somewhat relaxed. Another shall be found to share it with you!"

Strange to say, this assurance appeared to afford anything but satisfaction to the party who had so lately complained of the irksomeness of her position.

Gradually the changes predicted by Dr. Briard took place. The stupor which had fallen upon the victim

of so much cruelty and cunning was broken by violent fits of anger, which in their turn subsided into a state which had all the appearance of hopeless, perfect imbecility.

When the intelligence was communicated to the earl, he betrayed both surprise and alarm; but not one spark of feeling or remorse for the wreck his villany and heartlessness had made.

"Has her health suffered?" he demanded: that was his first consideration, for his interest were bound up in her existence.

"Not in the least," replied Dr. Briard, to whom the question had been addressed! "memory and hope are alike dead within her; she is likely to live longer in her present state than in any other!"

"But she may recover!"

"Never!" was the emphatic assurance of the charlatan. "Send for what man of science you may think fit, and I will stake my life that they pronounce her case hopeless!"

Lord Moretown was resolved to follow his advice, and an eminent physician from Carlisle was accordingly sent for.

When his visit was announced to the nurse, from some cause she seemed terribly alarmed; but conscious of the eyes that were upon her, she suppressed by a violent effort her emotion.

Athalie and his lordship accompanied the medical man to the chamber of the countess. They found her seated upon the floor, passing her long dark locks in a listless manner though her fingers. The poor victim neither raised her eyes nor betrayed the least emotion when they entered, but continued her occupation.

Not a word could be drawn from her. To the questions which were put to her she replied only by a vacant stare. Once, and once only, the Frenchwoman fancied she detected a tear glistening upon the lashes of her half-closed eyes.

"Her pulse beats rapidly," said the medical man, taking her thin, attenuated hand in his. "Has she taken any medicine lately?"

Dr. Briard and the nurse simultaneously answered that she had not.

The querist shrugged his shoulders: the case appeared to him only the more hopeless.

They shortly afterwards left the room.

"I am sorry to afflict your lordship," said the physician, "but it would be cruel to delude you with a false hope: Lady Moretown's disease is no longer madness—but perfect idiotcy."

The hypocrite received the intelligence with a deep-drawn sigh; Athalie with a feeling of intense satisfaction: her revenge was accomplished.

"Let her boy return," she thought; "she will never know him, or respond to his caress. Let ruin overtake me—she will never triumph in my defeat and shame."

After a few unimportant directions to Dr. Briard, his *confère* took his leave.

"Doctor," said his lordship, addressing the former personage, "the opinion which has just been pronounced will render your further residence here unnecessary. Make your arrangements, and follow us as soon as possible to London, when I trust to prove to you that I am not ungrateful for the services you have rendered me."

The charlatan bowed.

"And my promise," added the governess—for the peer had left the room at the conclusion of his speech to her husband—"shall be kept—kept to the letter," she added. "All your future wants will be provided for so amply, that you will never again accuse me of ingratitude and deception."

Her husband noticed not the equivocal nature of the assurance. His long-cherished dream of independence, and leisure to pursue his tastes and pleasures in Italy, appeared on the point of being realized—and he could neither think nor feel aught else.

As the carriage containing the earl and Athalie drove from the abbey, on their return to London, the latter hypocritically recommended the countess to the care and kindness of Mrs. Brooks, who stood in advance of the servants to make her adieus.

"Be kind to her," repeated the woman, with a convulsive sob, as the vehicle drove off; "ay, as kind as if the same mother had borne us—pitiless, remorseless fiend! God!" she added, "to what have her crimes reduced me! The instrument of an oppression at which my heart revolts!"

Before Dr. Briard left the abbey, one of those professional hags who have no conscience but for gold—no will but that of those who pay them for their ministry—arrived at the mansion, to share with Mrs. Brooks in the task of attending upon the countess. From the moment of her arrival the latter felt that every word she uttered, every action, was watched: she could not leave the house for an instant, but *Attée*—the name of the new attendant—was after her.

She found herself at last scarcely less a prisoner than the unhappy being committed to her charge.

CHAPTER CIII.

Thus even-handed justice
Returns the ingredients of the poisoned chalice
To our own lips.

Macbeth.

WHEN the charlatan arrived in town Lord Moretown presented him with five hundred pounds, and informed him that, as a mark of his satisfaction for the attention he had paid to the countess, he might draw upon Coutts's annually for the sum of two hundred guineas. The doctor was profuse in his gratitude—for half the sum he would willingly have poisoned a hundred victims, as far as any scruple of conscience were concerned.

All that now remained was the completion of his compact with Athalie, who offered to visit him at the lodging he had taken in the City, and bring the money with her.

"Why not here?" he demanded, when the proposal was made to him; "your visit to an obscure street may excite the suspicion of the servants."

"I shall take a hackney-coach," was the immediate reply.

"But your appearance in such a place!"

"Fear not—I will dress accordingly," interrupted his wife, determined to meet every objection. "The fact is, I am anything but assured of the fidelity of my domestics, and my lord has shown himself unusually suspicious and not a little jealous of late."

Her husband smiled with a cynical expression; from his knowledge of the *morale* of the speaker, he was not in the least surprised at the last assertion.

"You can represent me as your daughter," she added, in a slightly mocking tone, "should the people where you live prove curious."

Overcome by her perseverance, the old man reluctantly consented that she should visit him. We say reluctantly, not because he entertained any positive suspicion that she had any evil intentions towards him—what could she possibly accomplish there?—but simply because he desired to leave no trace by which he could be identified in England.

"Have you forgotten, Athalie," he asked, after a pause, "the question I so lately put to you respecting the goldsmith?"

"What question?"

"Whether he was curious in the purchase of antique gems?"

"I remember it," was the reply. "But why do you ask?"

The charlatan drew from his pocket a small *ecrin*, which he opened, and drew from it a ring in a curious enamelled setting. The stone was of plasma, or root emerald, engraved with a figure of Minerva—the work of some cunning Greek artist. The governess, who was a judge of such things, admired it exceedingly.

"Stay," said her husband, as she was about to draw it on her finger; "you know not what you are about to do."

She looked at him with surprise.

"It is poisoned," he continued, "after the manner of the Borgias. Worn but for an hour, death is sure to follow. I learned the secret in Italy," he added, "of a disciple of poor Tophana, whom they burnt one fine morning in the Piazza del Popolo, for the edification of the good citizens of Rome, and in honour of their church."

The governess dropped the ring upon the carpet. Like most persons who are cruel, she was a great coward.

"And what do you intend to do with it?" she demanded.

"Sell it."

"To whom?"

"To your enemy, Mr. Brindley," he replied; "his death will be slow and painful: so cunning is the operation of the drug, that there lives not in Europe a physician capable of naming the antidote."

"You know it?"

He nodded in the affirmative, and stooped to recover the gem. It had disappeared: a favourite spaniel of the earl's, who was in the room, had taken it in his mouth, and retreated with it under the sofa.

"Fidèle—Fidèle!" exclaimed Athalie, in a coaxing tone, "come here, pretty Fidèle! Here—here!"

The dog remained obstinately under the shelter of the sofa with his prize. Some moments elapsed before the animal could be driven from his retreat. No sooner had the governess secured him, than the charlatan took him from her arms, forced open his mouth, and repossessed himself of the antique gem.

"Its virtue is gone," he exclaimed, with an air of vexation; "the dog has absorbed the poison."

The doctor nodded in the affirmative.

"And will die?"

The disappointment of her revenge against the venerable uncle of Alice rendered her indifferent to the fate of the pet which she had so frequently caressed and fondled. Ringing the bell, she directed the domestic who answered it to remove the animal, stating that it had had a fit.

"Can you not restore its virtue?" inquired the fiend, at the same time pointing to the ring, which the old poisoner still held in his hand.

"It would take more time than I can spare," was the reply.

"Why did you not prepare more of the poison?"

"It would have been useless," answered the doctor; it is not, strictly speaking, a body—but a thin vapour merely, which has an affinity for no other substance but gold. Any article to be impregnated with it must be exposed to a continuous stream of the subtle fluid for three days and nights—then the work of death is complete."

Replacing the now harmless trinket, the speaker left the house and returned to his lodgings, to prepare for his final departure from England for that land where he had gleaned the knowledge he had through life perverted to such evil purposes.

That same day the spaniel died, to the great annoyance of Lord Moretown, who was partial to the animal, but who little suspected the cause: the veterinary surgeon whom he sent for declaring that its death was occasioned by a species of asphyxia, from being overfed—a very common case with the pets of the aristocracy.

At a late hour the following evening Dr. Briard was seated in his lodgings, awaiting the arrival of Athalie. He had rung twice for coffee, and was growing impatient. As he raised his hands to the bell for the third time, the landlady of the house entered his apartment with his favourite beverage.

"I have waited," he muttered, in a harsh tone.

"It was not my fault," replied the woman, submissively; "the person whom you expected has at last arrived."

"Did you keep the boy from her sight?" he demanded.

"I followed your directions," answered the female, "and have sent him out to play with his companions; though for the life of me I cannot tell why you should wish it: he is a son any father might well be proud of. It will break my heart," she added, "to part with him—he is the only tie left me in the world since his mother's death."

These brief words will explain to our readers why Doctor Briard had been so anxious to prevent Athalie from visiting him at his lodgings. Soon after her liaison with the Earl of Moretown, he had won the affections of the daughter of his landlady, and married her: the unfortunate girl died soon afterwards, leaving him a son, upon whom he had bestowed all that remained of human affection in his withered heart. It was his intention to take the lad to Italy with him, and educate him.

"You cannot judge of my motives," he observed. "Jules is like me, and the visitor I expect has an eye keen as the falcon's when in pursuit of its prey."

"Is she related to you?" inquired the landlady.

"Not in the least," said the doctor, in a careless tone; "now are you satisfied? But show her in, and do not on any account let our conversation be interrupted. By what name did she inquire for me?" he added.

"Jules Bertrand," said the landlady, leaving the room to execute the order she had received.

"Right," muttered the old man; "she has not forgotten it. The boy shall bear that name—become my pupil, friend, and confidant; for, after all, study and philosophy as we will, the heart requires something to repose upon—something to love: science may amuse but cannot occupy it."

Strange as it must appear to our readers, the old poisoner really loved that boy—the offspring of crime; for we need not say that the marriage with his mother had been a mockery—seeing that the doctor was already the husband of Athalie.

"You are as difficult of access as a prime minister," observed the governess, in an angry tone, as she entered the room.

"Be patient," said Briard; "let not our interview be filled with reproaches."

Athalie silently seated herself in the chair to which he pointed.

"Have you brought the money?" he added.

His wife drew from her bosom a small pocket-book, and took from it eight notes of five hundred pounds each. Dr. Briard counted them carefully over.

"I have fulfilled my promise," she observed.

"You have," replied the old man, as he carefully folded the notes; "and wisely, too—for compacts like ours, when broken, generally end fatally to one or both of the parties."

His visitor smiled disdainfully, as if in defiance of his threats.

"And now Athalie," he said, "let us part friends: in all probability, in this world we shall never meet again."

"Do you expect it in the next?" demanded the woman, with a sneer; "are these the lessons you taught me?"

"There are greater mysteries than science can ex-

plain," said her husband, "or than we have dreamed of. There are few who die infidels, although many live such."

"This from you!" exclaimed his wife; "why, the next thing I shall hear of you will be that you have turned Trappist! I should like to hear your first sermon," she added; "it would be edifying."

The charlatan rose from his seat with the roll of notes in his hand; and, after placing them carefully in a large travelling trunk, which was partially filled with books and linen, he closed the lid and turned the key, which he put in his pocket.

With a dexterity which required great nerve and presence of mind—for the consequence of detection might have been fearful—Athalie, the instant his back was turned, drew from her bosom the flask of poison, and dropped a portion of the contents into the coffee, which still remained untasted upon the table; then, fearful lest the odour of the drug should betray her, she opened her scent bottle, and began to cast the perfume about the room.

"What are you doing?" inquired her husband, sharply.

"Can't you see?" she replied, with the utmost composure; "the close air of this room is enough to stifle one!"

"Ay!" said the old man, reseating himself: "it is not like your sixteen boudoir at the earl's—but I am less fastidious! You would come—so do not blame me; but since you are here, let me offer you some refreshment?"

"No!"

"A cup of coffee?"

"Have you prepared it for me?" demanded the governess, with an air of suspicion.

"No, Athalie!" replied the doctor. "Bad as I am, and reckless as I have proved myself, I should have hesitated ere I attempted your life! There is one tie between us which I cannot forget!"

The Frenchwoman elevated her eyebrows, with a gesture of impatience.

"You are the mother of my child!"

"And that coffee, I presume," observed the Frenchwoman, with a sneer, "was prepared for the mother of your child! I know you! The fiend is never so dangerous as when he indulges in sentiment or morality!"

"And do you really imagine," demanded her husband, "that the cup is poisoned?"

"I have not the least doubt of it!"

"This then to convince you that you are in error!"

So saying, he took the cup in his hand, and drained it to the last drop. The eyes of Athalie shot a momentary glance of triumph as he replaced it on the table.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE BORDEAUX paper speaks of a new steam-ran which is now on the stocks in that dockyard. The "Sphinx" is 52 metres long, 10 wide, draws 4.40 metres of water, and carries a 300-hp. and two 70-hp. The constructor flatters himself that this vessel can resist any shot at any distance, while no walls or ships will be able to stand against her 300-pound shot.

A NEW BRICK FOR GARDEN WALLS.—Mr. Foxley, of Stoney-Stratford, has invented a new brick, ingeniously contrived for avoiding the necessity of nailing for training trees to garden walls. The brick has a projecting bead in the centre of the face, which is drilled with holes so as to admit of the passage of a piece of string, with which the branch may be tied. One great advantage of the bead is, that it admits of a free circulation of air between the plant and the wall, preventing the formation of mildew and rot, and the accumulation of insects. The cost is little more than the ordinary brick.

THE RAINBOW DANCE.—During one season I had a stall at the German Opera. One evening, in the cloister scene by moonlight, in the convent, I observed that the white bonnet of my companion had a pink tint; so also had the paper of our books and every white object around us. This contrast of colour suggested to me the direct use of coloured lights. The progress of science in producing intense lights by the oxy-hydrogen blowpipe, and by electricity under its various forms, enabled me to carry out the idea of producing coloured lights for theatrical representations. I made many experiments by filling cells formed by pieces of parallel plate-glass with solutions of various salts of chrome of copper, and of other substances. The effects were superb. I then devised a dance, in which they might be splendidly exhibited. This was called the rainbow dance. I proposed to abolish the foot-lights, and, instead of them, to substitute four urns with flowers. These urns would each conceal from the audience an intense light of one of the following colours—blue, yellow, red, or any others which might be preferable. The rays of light would be pro-

jected from the vases towards the stage, and would form four cones of red, blue, yellow, and purple light passing to its farther end. Four groups, each of fifteen danseuses in pure white, would now enter on the stage. Each group would assume the colour of the light in which it was placed. Thus four dances, each of a different colour, would commence. Occasionally a damsel from a group of one colour would spring into another group, thus resembling a shooting star. After a time the coloured lights would expand laterally and overlap each other, thus producing all the colours of the rainbow. In the meantime the sixty damsels in pure white, forming one vast ellipse, would dance round, each in turn assuming, as it passed through them, all the prismatic colours. I had mentioned these experiments and ideas to a few of my friends, one of whom spoke of it to Mr. Lumley, the lessee of the Italian Opera House. He thought it promised well, and ultimately I made a series of experiments in the great concert-room.—"Passage from the Life of a Philosopher." By C. Babbage.

BOILED TELEGRAPH WIRE.—Boiled wire is used by some telegraph companies, and the process of preparing it is thus described:—"The wire, in coils, is placed in a large iron cauldron, filled with linsed oil, and boiled about fifteen minutes, when it is presumed to be 'done.' By this process it receives a coat of glazing, which preserves it from rust. The wooden blocks, or braces, by which the insulators are placed, are also boiled, but in different material. They are made of sycamore wood, and are boiled—100 at a time—for a period of one hour, in ordinary coal tar. The effect of subjecting the sycamore to this process is to render it secure against warping, or cracking from sun or rain."

ON THE ALLOYS OF SILVER AND ZINC. BY M. PELIGOT.

IN consequence of the increasing scarcity of silver money in France, which is constantly disappearing from circulation on account of the continued rise in the value of the metal, the French Government is about to lower the standard of the silver coinage by the addition of about 7 per cent. more copper. The new money will be made of an alloy consisting of 835 parts silver and 165 parts copper.

M. Peligot is chemist to the French mint, and he has made experiments to ascertain how the introduction of zinc, or the complete substitution of zinc for the copper, would affect the alloy. He has found that alloys of the legal standard in which part of the whole of the copper was replaced by zinc are remarkably malleable, and when rolled are perfectly homogeneous.

They are of a beautiful white colour, but the binary alloy of silver and zinc is somewhat yellowish. The fusibility of the zinc alloys is greater than the copper; they are very sonorous and elastic, and if made brittle by hammering, the malleability is restored by heating.

The study of the atomic alloys showed curious results. Equal equivalents of silver and zinc, or two equivalents of silver to one of zinc, gave malleable alloys, while the compounds Ag plus 2Zn and 2Ag plus 3Zn are too brittle to be rolled. As a matter of economy, the author recommends that his Government should employ zinc to reduce the value of the present money, the price of zinc being only one-fifth that of copper. Another recommendation to the zinc alloys is the fact of its blackening less readily with sulphurated hydrogen than the copper compound; copper indeed, seeming to increase the discoloration. An alloy of 800 of silver and 200 zinc will keep its whiteness in a solution of polysulphide which will rapidly blacken the legal alloy of copper and silver. This, as the author points out, will be useful information to the makers of jewellery. The absence of verdigris under the action of acid liquors is another advantage. In conclusion, the author mentions a fact of no great importance to us, namely, that the introduction of zinc into money is nothing new. French copper money contains one per cent. of zinc, and the small coins of Switzerland contain zinc, silver, and nickel.

METAL-WORKING.—The perfection to which metal-working has attained is one of the miracles of modern times. Tools cut iron and brass at speeds which, fifteen years ago, would have been pronounced unobtainable with economy. In gun and pistol factories and in sewing-machine shops, the various pieces are turned, milled, sawed, planed, or ground in such quantities and with such unflinching accuracy as to command the admiration of the observer. Not only have the tools been greatly improved in their character, but the material worked upon has also undergone important modifications; by this we mean the processes to which it is subjected before it is worked by cutters. Steel is annealed so thoroughly that its character as a tough, tenacious, and stubborn metal is wholly destroyed, and it becomes as tractable, so to speak, as the softest iron. Its virtue is not destroyed

by this operation, but changed, and the temper is restored again at will. It is important to remember that these improvements in working metals were not reached by conjecture or by a single bound; but by successive steps and careful experiment. Whatever advantages we enjoy over other nations, as skilful workmen, is due wholly to the skill and intelligence of our artisans, and it is no hyperbole to say that they are indeed the bulwarks of the nation.

HOW FISH CHANGE COLOUR.

THE change of colour in fish is most remarkable, and takes place with great rapidity. Put a living trout from a black burn into a white basin of water, and it becomes, within half-an-hour, of a light colour. Keep the fish living in a white jar for some days, and it becomes absolutely white; but put it then into a dark-coloured or black vessel, and although on first being placed there the white-coloured fish shows most conspicuously on the black ground, in a quarter of an hour it becomes as dark-coloured as the bottom of the jar, and consequently difficult to be seen. No doubt this facility of adapting its colour to the bottom of the water in which it lives, is of the greatest service to the fish in protecting it from its numerous enemies. All anglers must have observed that in every stream the trout are very much the same colour as the gravel or sand. Whether this change of colour is a voluntary or involuntary act on the part of the fish, is a matter for scientific investigation and discussion.

ONE of the few novelties shown at the Bath and West of England show was a horse-shoe, patented by Mr. Fowler, the inventor of the steam plough. In this invention the object, it is said, has been obtained which has long been sought, of introducing a spring under the horse's foot in a practical manner, so as to lessen the blow that is so fatal to the soundness of horses which have to travel over hard stones instead of their natural pathway, the turf. If any elastic material is introduced between an ordinary shoe and the hoof, the rebound of the spring bears the shoe from the foot. To obviate this difficulty, Mr. Fowler uses a second shoe, and places the elastic between them. The double shoe is connected with the foot by means of rivets, which hold it firmly, but allow the necessary movement for the spring to act. It is hoped the spring shoe will prove as useful to the public and as profitable to the inventor as the steam plough.

THE UNCHOKABLE SHIP'S PUMP.

THE best pump for use at sea is that which throws most water with least expenditure of power, and suffers least from the presence of foreign bodies, such as chips, sand, &c., in the water pumped.

We had the pleasure of seeing a pump, invented and manufactured by Mr. T. Suffield, of East-lane, Bermondsey, tried at Messrs. Gostler and Palmer's new tannery, Bermondsey, which appears to us to answer every purpose which a ship's pump should answer. The tan pits are lined with wood, and have a false perforated bottom; down the centre of each runs a square wooden trunk.

In one corner of the main building are placed the Suffield pumps, which at a speed of 40 revolutions per minute will throw about 10,000 gals. per hour. The pits are arranged in groups of four. In the centre of each group is placed a small well. Any pit, separately, can be placed in communication with this well, and the "liquor"—which, by the way, is said to be of the same pecuniary value as porter—can then be pumped from the well into a tank about 9 ft. above the surface level of the yard, from which, by means of shoots, it can be delivered down the central trunks into the space beneath the perforated bottom of the pit.

Through this it rises, the expedient being adopted in order to keep the fresh bark with which the pit is filled "lively," that is, loose and uncompact. By the aid of this single pump any pit of an immense number may be emptied into another. From the nature of the bark, it will be seen that any pump pretending to deal with the "liquor," must be competent to deal with small pieces of bark, &c., floating in it as well. The perforated bottoms of the pits act the part of strainers, it is true, but very imperfectly.

The Suffield pump is really a ship's pump, and its valves will pass anything which can enter the four-inch rising main. A square yard of canvas, a whole basketful of cork bungs, &c., certainly make no impression on it whatever. A practically unchokable pump is just the thing for tannery purposes, and it has been selected accordingly.

We need hardly add that a pump without strainers, grating, &c., of any kind, which cannot be choked by anything which can enter the rising main is, above all others, adapted for marine purposes, and the Suffield pump appears in every respect to deserve its high character.

INDIA-RUBBER-COVERED CABLES.—Messrs. Wells and Hall have within the last few days delivered some few miles of india-rubber-covered wire for Government telegraphs, a few particulars of which we append,

because this length of core evinces a proficiency of workmanship of a very satisfactory and reassuring character, and augurs well for the future of submarine telegraphy, if the same care is exercised and perfection attained in the manufacture of the outward part of the cable, as is now attainable in what is technically termed the "core." The wire in question consists of a No. 18 (diam. .043) tinned copper, insulated to a total diam. of .25 in. Weight of copper per mile, 30 lb. Weight of insulator per mile, 60 lb. The resistance of the insulating medium for one mile, tested in water at a temperature of 60 deg. Fahr., is 4,750,000 Siemens units, and the resistance of the conductor 54 Siemens units. No tar is to be applied to the core, because of its well known deteriorating effects when brought into contact with the rubber. The durability of this material is satisfactory established if engineers will avoid the use of tar, and be more cautious that the protecting sheath shall not belie its character by introducing an element or elements of destruction. It will be obvious from this, that the insulation tests, both static and dynamic, are of a very high character in comparison with results obtained on other materials.

ENORMOUS CASTING AT SHEFFIELD.

WE have to record the casting of a 160-ton anvil-block, which was successfully accomplished at Messrs. T. M. Stanley and Co's., of the Midland Works. The casting-shop in which the monster was brought into shape and form was that in which the previous castings had been made.

In the centre of the floor a great pit was dug, and in this the mould was formed, the anvil being cast with its face downwards. The mould was 12 ft. square at the base, and 11 ft. 6 in. deep, and it was estimated that nearly 170 tons of iron would be required to fill it.

At intervals outside the shop were five furnaces, and at six o'clock in the morning these commenced to pour their molten contents into the huge chasm, and continued until about five o'clock, when the operation was declared to be successfully completed.

The scene in the casting-shop was most animated. From four or five different points, streams of liquid fire were slowly rolling to the edge of the pit, where they fell, amidst showers of starry sparks, into the vast mass beneath. A metal rod was thrust through the mass to test its perfect liquidity; and, this having been satisfactorily proved, the top of the pit was carefully closed, to be opened no more until the metal has cooled, which will probably be in about seven weeks.

The anvil is intended to be placed in the gun manufactory of Messrs. Firth, which is close to the Midland works, on the Sheffield side of the second railway bridge. The predecessors of this anvil are fixed in an immense and admirably arranged forge, where seven huge Nasmyth hammers are continually employed in the forging of guns, and the great shafts and cranks of marine engines. The "160-ton" will be placed in a forge that is now building at the corner of the works nearest the railway. The distinguished stranger will be amply provided for, as one of his weight and substance should be.

The block will have to sustain the blows of a 25-ton steam hammer (Nasmyth), which will be employed in forging the 600-pr. and 300-pr. guns that Messrs. Firth are making for Mr. Whitworth.

NEW METHOD OF TAKING PORTRAITS.—A new era in portraiture is predicted from the discovery of a Mr. Swan, who presents a solid, life-like likeness of any one, inclosed in a cube of crystal. The effect of the new process is to exhibit the subject of the portraiture with life-like verisimilitude, in natural relief. You take up a small case, and look through what appears to be a little window, and there stands or sits before you, in a pleasantly-lighted chamber, a marvellous effigy of a lady or gentleman, as the case may be. The projection of the nose, the moulding of the lips, and all the gradations of contour, are as distinct as if an able sculptor had exercised his skill; but the hair and the flesh are of their proper tint, and the whole thing has a singularly vital and comfortable look. Indeed, were it not for the reduction in size, it would be difficult to avoid the belief that an actual man or woman, in ordinary dress and with characteristic expression, was presented to your eye.

THE French Government has signed a contract with an English house, guaranteeing them \$48,800*f*. a year, and other advantages, for the use of a cable which the firm is to have the right of laying down between France and America, *via* the Azores and Newfoundland. Other advantages are secured for the firm, which will found a joint stock company to carry out the undertaking. The cable is to be laid in three years.

SINCE the conviction has been arrived at that the Briggs murder was perpetrated by a foreigner, there

has arisen in many quarters in Paris a surmise that the notorious Judd, who made a French railway carriage the scene of his operation some years back, and has up to this hour baffled all pursuit, though hunted all over the Continent, has been lurking all the while in London, and now resumed his dreadful trade.

DURING the entry of the Emperor and Empress Maximilian into Mexico, the latter showed evident signs of great fatigue. The Mexican Indians gave the Royal pair a great ovation, and placed on his Majesty's head an antique crown made of unburnished gold. There is no doubt his Majesty will have a great deal of work to do in polishing and ornamenting in Mexico, and this rough gift will remind him of it.

THE following is a copy of the certificate of discharge to some of the crew of the Alabama, viz:—*"Aide toi et Dieu t'aidera."* June, 1864. This certifies that ———, aboard the C. S. steamer Alabama, has this day been paid off and honourably discharged from the naval service of the Confederate States.—R. SEMMES, C. S. Navy." The confederate flag, containing fourteen stars, is engraved on the certificate.

ST. SWITHIN'S DAY has passed without a shower. It was, indeed, one of the brightest and warmest days we have had during this exceptionally bright and warm season, and, if there is any truth in the meteorological legend associated with the anniversary of the saint, we ought to have a fine and early harvest. There is still a large class of people who believe most religiously in the alleged influence of St. Swithun upon the weather.

SACRIFICE OF LIFE IN ANCIENT WARS.—The siege of Troy lasted ten years and eight months, and at the taking of the city there were slain 890,000 Grecians, and 670,000 Trojans, and afterwards 570,000 men, women and children. Caesar killed 1,000,000, Mahomet 800,000. At the siege of Jerusalem, 1,100,000 died with the sword and famine. At the battle of Cannæ 70,000 men were slain, and at the siege of Ostend 120,000 lost their lives.

STATISTICS.

THE quantity of cotton exported from Shanghai, in 1863, is valued at 3,500,000*l*., against 1,000,000*l*. in the previous year.

MURDER.—Last week a return was issued, showing that in the last seven years, from 1857 to 1863 inclusive, 691 persons were committed for murder in England and Wales, of whom 246 were acquitted, 50 acquitted as insane, 30 found insane on arraignment, 153 convicted of murder, 127 of manslaughter, 85 of concealment of birth, and 96 were executed for the capital offences. The corresponding figures for Scotland are 257, 43, 9, 2, 17, 48, 29, and 5; and for Ireland, 548, 174, 11, 8, 30, 148, 45, and 15.

A PARLIAMENTARY return shows an enormous increase in the import of linen yarn from France into the United Kingdom. In the year ending with May, 1863, the import was 461,366 lb., of the value of 16,193*l*.; in the year ending with May, 1864, the quantity was 4,082,646 lb., of the value of 164,543*l*. On the other hand, the import of jute yarn fell from 877,011 lb., of the value of 16,609*l*., to 96,213 lb., of the value of 10,210*l*. Of cambrics and French lawns we imported from France in the latter of the two years 58,285 square yards, of the value of 9,473*l*.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

THE FARMER'S BAROMETER.—Take a common pickle-bottle, wide-mouthed, fill it within three inches of the top with water; then take a common Florence oil flask, removing the straw covering and cleansing the flask thoroughly; plunge the neck of the flask into the pickle-bottle as far as it will go, and the barometer is complete. In fine weather the water will rise into the neck of the flask even higher than the mouth of the pickle-bottle, and in wet and windy weather it will fall to within an inch of the mouth of the flask. Before a heavy gale of wind, the water has been seen to leave the flask altogether at least eight hours before the gale came to its height. The invention was made by a German.

THE POTATO DISEASE.—For years the inquiry has been made, "Where shall we obtain the potato free from disease?" The question is now to be answered, but not until after long experience. A private gentleman now residing at Burnriggs, Cumberland, had tried various means to renew the potato, all of which proved unsuccessful until the autumn of 1852, when he gathered some apples or crabs from the healthiest haulm he could find: these he sowed in the spring of 1853, and in the third year gathered apples again from those; and so on, until he had an immense variety of this necessary of life. It appears that out of all the varieties he has only kept three kinds. The first is a round potato, very early, and

in which he has never found the slightest sign of disease. He has this year the crabs nearly ripe, which he intends sowing next spring. The second kind is not quite so early, but of a long kidney species, and immensely prolific, with a vast number of eyes, scarcely discernible till the spring; of this he has found one potato, in 1861, diseased. The third, and which he appears most to value, is a very late potato, possessing qualities peculiar to itself. It is planted at the usual time, and will continue growing till late in the season. Should frost come, it destroys the leaves, but not the haulm; and in the case of mild weather succeeding, it will again put forth fresh leaves. It has also the singular property of keeping good and fit for use longer than any other potato. A few which had been laid aside and kept for eighteen months were found, when prepared for the table, to be as good as when taken up. May not this method of growing potatoes be taken up by the agriculturists in general, and a renovated and healthy stock of this useful cereal be the result?

FACETIÆ.

WHY are good husbands like dough? Because women need them.

THE REASON.—Why do men who are about to fight a duel generally choose a field for the place of action? For the purpose of allowing the ball to graze.

PHILOSOPHICAL.—Life, we are told, is a journey; and to see the way in which some people eat, you would imagine they were taking in provisions to last them the whole length of the journey.

AN ACUTE LAD.

Schoolmaster: "How many kinds of axes are there?"

Little Boy: "Broad axe, narrow axe, iron axe, steel axe, axe of the Apostles, and axe my father!"

Schoolmaster: "Good; go to the top of the class."

A JUDGE OF PORK.—"No man," says Mrs. Partington, "was better calculated to judge of pork than my husband was; he knew what good hogs were, he did, for he had been brought up with 'em from his childhood."

A RICH COUNTRY.—An Irishman having moved out West to a newly settled country, where the rainy weather prevailed, was asked by an old acquaintance how he liked it. "Och! shure! and I like it first rate," said he. "You may take a handful of the soil and you can squeeze the very fat out of it."

AS PLAIN AS A, B, C.

Why ought the letters of the Alphabet to be rearranged? Because many of them are out of "order."

Why are twenty-two of them very unfortunate? Because they are always out of "luck."

Why is it a paradox that they are so? Because many that are out of luck are in "prosperity."

An elderly gentleman, of considerable experience, says that he is never satisfied that a lady knows how to kiss unless he has it from her own lips. Clever old fellow that!

THE Bishop of Oxford has been delivering a lecture this week to some young men in the City, on "Life in London." What does the worthy bishop know about the matter? We would venture to show him—but no matter.

THE Emperor of Mexico is about to notify, by autograph letters to England, France, Russia, Spain, and Prussia, that he has arrived safely at Mexico, and is going on as well as can be expected under the circumstances.

PEOPLE say they shall peas, when they unshell them; that they husk corn when they unhusk it; that they dust the furniture, when they undust it, or take the dust from it; and that they scale fishes, when they unscale them. I have heard many men say they were going to weed their gardens, when I thought their gardens were weedy enough already.

COULDN'T TRUST A STRANGER.—"Why," said a country clergyman to one of his flock, "do you sleep in your pew when I am in the pulpit, while you're all attention to every stranger whom I invite to preach for me?" "Because, sir, when you preach, I am sure all is right, but I cannot trust a stranger, without keeping a good look out."

A GLOUCESTER newspaper states that the residents of Northleach have been put to great inconvenience by the only barber in the place being sent to gaol for two months. One man sent three miles for some one to shave him. Could not Ronconi be sent down to fill the place of the "Barbier" in the interior?

A GOOD DINER.—"How thankful we ought to be for the many good things which are provided for us to enjoy," said a gentleman at a City dinner the other day. "The beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, and the

fishes of the sea," he continued, "were all created for the use of man." "Very true," replied his friend; "but if you had witnessed the hairbreadth escape which I experienced of being devoured alive by a shark, when in the West Indies, you would have been satisfied that the horrible monster entertained just the opposite opinion. He believed that man was created for him."

THE NEW COLOURS.

A Nursery Sea-Song.

So we've done with the Red, White, and Blue,
And we've done with the Red, White, and Blue;
For we hear from Lord Clarence,
The nautical Barons
Have made an arrangement that's new.

Her Majesty's ensign is White,
Yes, Her Majesty's ensign is White;
And ships of all nations
Must make salutations
Whenever that flag comes in sight.

But what have you done with the Blue?
And what have you done with the Blue?
That colour is handed
To vessels commanded
And manned by Reserve-Men so true.

Then who shall display the bold Red?
And who shall display the bold Red?
Bold Merchants, whose story
Is England's true glory,
Shall hoist the proud flag. Go to bed.

Punch.

A GOOD joke is circulating in Paris at the expense of the doctors; and as they put us to some bodily pain and expense, why should we not have a retaliation? M. D., the great physician, was recently called in to prescribe for a girl who had swallowed a five franc gold piece; he gave her an emetic, and called next day, but to his astonishment learnt that his emetic was not strong enough, as it only produced four francs and a-half.

A LADY'S LEAP YEAR SONG TO A SOLDIER, AND WHAT HE MADE OF IT.

Question.—Oh, soldier, soldier, wont you marry me,
With your musket, fife, and drum?

Answer.—Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you
When I've got no "hat" to put on?

Chorus.—So away they ran to the hatter's shop
As fast as they could run,
And she bought him a hat of the very,
very best,
And the soldier put it on.

Question.—Oh, soldier, soldier, please marry me,
With your musket, fife, and drum?

Answer.—Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you
When I've got no "coat" to put on?

Chorus.—So away they ran to the tailor's shop
At fast as they could run,
And she bought him a coat of the very,
very best,
And the soldier put it on.

Question.—Oh, soldier, soldier, do marry me,
With your musket, fife, and drum?

Answer.—Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you
When I've got no "boots" to put on?

Chorus.—So away they ran to the shoemaker's shop
As fast as they could run,
And she bought him a pair of the very,
very best,
And the soldier put them on.

Question.—Now, soldier, soldier, won't you marry me,
With your musket, fife, and drum?

Answer.—Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you
When I've got a wife at home?

LAMB once convulsed a company with an anecdote of Coleridge, which, without doubt, he hatched in his hoax-loving brain. "I was," he said, "going from my house at Enfield to the East India House one morning, when I met Coleridge on his way to pay me a visit. He was brimful of some new idea, and in spite of my assuring him that time was precious, he drew me within the gate of an unoccupied garden by the roadside, and there, sheltered from observation by a hedge of evergreens, he took me by the button of my coat, and closing his eyes, commenced an eloquent discourse, waving his right hand gently as the musical words flowed in an unbroken stream from his lips. I

listened, entranced; but the striking clock recalled me to a sense of duty. I saw it was of no use to attempt to break away; so, taking advantage of his absorption in his subject, and with my penknife, quietly severing my button from my coat, I decamped. Five hours afterwards, in passing the same garden, on my way home, I heard Coleridge's voice; and on looking in, there he was with closed eyes, the button in his fingers, and the right hand gracefully waving, just as when I left him. He had never missed me."

IRISH ECONOMY.

At a late assize in Ireland, two men were condemned to be hanged. On receiving their sentence one of them addressed the judge, and said he had two favours to ask him.

"What are they?" said his lordship.

"Place your honor, will you let me hang this man before I am hanged myself?"

"What is the other request?" said the judge, quietly.

"Why, please your honor, will you let my wife hang me, for she will do it more tenderly than the hangman, and then what she will receive for the job will help the poor cratur to pay the rent."

A GALLANT was lately sitting beside his beloved; and being unable to think of anything to say, asked her why she was like a tailor? "I don't know," said she, with a pouting lip, "unless it is because I'm sitting beside a goose."

A GENTLEMAN who had borrowed money of all his friends, at last applied to an old Quaker, who said, "Friend Fordyce, I have known several persons ruined by two dice; and I will take care not to be ruined by four dice."

THE BEST MATCHES.—It was told Lord Chesterfield that Mrs. M., a termagant and scold, was married to a gamester; on which his lordship said, "that cards and brimstone made the best matches."

AN Italian prince, when he went a journey, always took his cook with him. When rounding the abrupt angle of a rock, which was exceedingly perilous, he heard the cry of a man, the snort of a mule, and the crash of some one falling over the precipice. The horror-stricken prince cried out, "The cook! Is it the cook?" "No, your excellency," replied the attendant, "it is Don Battista." "Ah, only the chaplain! Heaven be praised!"

THE following characteristic anecdote is related of Lord Thurlow. He was one day hearing an appeal case in the House of Lords, when a Scotch advocate who had been speaking for some considerable time, and showed no signs of leaving off, said, "I will now proceed to make a few remarks on the seventh point." "No, I'm—if you do," said his Lordship. "I adjourn the hearing till Monday." He then took up his hat and rushed out of the House.

A CONFECTIONER has had the curious mania of collecting portraits of Napoleon I., not one of which was to resemble the other completely. He has succeeded in getting together 35,000 portraits. He thought the fact so curious that he offered the prints to Government, who, however, snubbed him, leading him to understand that he had endeavoured to fling ridicule, not shed glory, on the name of the first Nap., who was not a double-faced man.

A CLERGYMAN in Perthshire, who is more skilful as an angler than popular as a preacher, having fallen into conversation with some of his parishioners on the benefits of early rising, mentioned, as an instance, that he had that very morning before breakfast composed a sermon and killed a salmon—an achievement on which he plumed himself greatly. "A weel, sir," observed one of the company, "I would rather have yer salmon than yer sermon."

A GREAT GARDENER'S FIRST ATTEMPT.—An anecdote is told of the great Thomas Andrew Knight, who, when a child, on seeing the gardener one day planting beans in the ground, asked him why he buried those bits of wood, and was told that they would grow into bean-plants, and bear beans. He watched the event, and, finding that it happened as the gardener had foretold, determined to plant his pocket-knife, in the expectation of its also growing, and bearing other knives.

MR. W. G. CLARKE, who has been looking up the Russians in Poland, tells an anecdote of the lingering memory of Old England in the mind of a Russian officer which is pleasant to our pride to hear of. Mr. Clarke was passing by a hut, when one of the officers came out and spoke in English. He was from Finland, he said. During the Crimean war he had been taken prisoner and sent to Lewes, and he retained a most grateful remembrance of the kindness with which he had been treated by the neighbouring gentry. He detected the service on which he was engaged (that of fighting the Poles), not, as it seemed, from any sympathy with the insurgents, but because it was so unlike fair fighting, so unfit for a soldier and a gentle-

man. "Ah!" he added, "I would yet be a prisoner at Lewis." For the sake of the Peles we wish he was, and a great many more Muscovites with him.

A RICH manufacturer at Sedan, somewhat remarkable for stinginess, went to a celebrated tailor at Paris to order a coat. He asked the price. "A hundred and fifty francs," he thought this rather dear. "I shall furnish my own cloth," he said. "Just as you like, sir," replied the tailor. The coat having been sent, the manufacturer asked what he had to pay for the making. "A hundred and fifty francs," was again the answer. "But I furnished the cloth," "Sir," said the tailor, solemnly, "I never reckon the cloth; I always give it into the bargain."

ABE LINCOLN'S LAST.—"Did you ever see a wild goose a floatin' on the ocean?" asked the president of the secretary of the treasury, in the words of "Ole Zip Coon." "Well," answered the secretary, "I guess I have." "Why, then," says Abe, "you ought to know what it's like; but if you don't, I'll tell you—between yourself, mind, so don't you go tellin' nobody else. A wild goose a floatin' on the ocean is like the Union, and our tryin' to restore the Union is pretty much like swimmin' arter the goose—a wild goose, Chase. And, Chase, you knew as well as I do, that the end of a wild goose-chase is gone goose."

BEER.—What's the difference between Bad Beer, Ginger Beer, and Good Beer? Because they are respectively All Slop, All Pop, and All-sop.—Punch.

A PLEASANT KIND OF UNCLE.

Scene—Inside a cab. Uncle on back seat. Two nice boys on front seat.

Uncle: "Now, Reginald, look over my head, and tell me the number of this cab."

Reginald (slowly): "One, six, six, eight."

Uncle (sternly): "How dare you, sir? Say sixteen hundred and sixty-eight. Now, James, what important events in English history happened in 1668?"

[The boys think they might as well not be out for a cheerful holiday.]—Punch.

HINT FOR CLEANING WINDOWS.

(From our Collect-Hatchney Housekeeper's Companion.)

Window Cleanings.—Be careful not to stand outside the windows, but sit down upon them, pulling up the lower sash, and pulling down the upper one at the same time. Take out each pane separately, and clean it. This should be done quickly. If the windows are of plate glass, their appearance is much improved by throwing stones and dust over them. Clean the corners of each pane with a sharp-pointed stick, which you can easily push through, so as to remove the dust from the interior and exterior simultaneously.

The Housekeeper's Companion also contains the following excellent Rules for establishing Libraries in villages and village towns:—

1. That every subscriber be allowed to take out all the books at a time.
2. That he may not keep them away for more than a month, except after special application to the librarian, which shall be invariably refused; but which refusal, to avoid all offence, shall not have any effect on the subscriber.
3. That all persons paying nothing a year, half in advance, shall become life-members, and be admitted to all the privileges of a full member.
4. That a member shall only be a full member after dinner.
5. That for the purpose of diffusing useful knowledge in the village, all the books shall be in Hebrew, Sanscrit, Syro-Chaldaic, and ancient Hindu characters.
6. That the library shall be open once a year, from ten till four, during which time the free list will be entirely suspended.
7. No restriction as to evening dress, which will be worn by all subscribers throughout the current year.—Punch.

A Flowery NAME FOR EARL RUSSELL.—JOHN QUILL.—Jonguille!—Fun.

VERY CONSIDERATE, INDEED!—Some Prussian officers were recently heard to say that they considered themselves Denmark's best friends, because, for a nation, as for an individual, there was nothing so beneficial as "occupation."—Fun.

ANTIQUARIAN MEM.—"Old Phogey" writes to inform us that he has discovered in the ruins of the turnpike gate a curious inscription, which would appear to correct an error in a popular saying. The words are, "Promises are like pike-trusts, made to be broken." It is supposed that they were written by a misanthrope who was obliged to cease from robbing the public on the 1st of July.—Fun.

THE GIRLERY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.—The ladies are very dissatisfied with their gallery at Westminster Palace. They want the bars removed, in

order that their eyes may rain influence, uninterrupted by a lattice. The inconvenience to them is a grate, but the disadvantage would be a greater, Mr. Cowper thinks, if M.P.'s could feast their eyes on beauty to make up for having their ears besieged by boredom. Well, if the girls will give up their crinoline, we'll see about our cage.—Fun.

MY STARS.—At the last meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society a great many papers were read, and among them a very sporting one by Mr. Herschel. It is described by a scientific contemporary as "On shooting stars in March." We have heard of shooting the moon about the 25th of that month, but we were not aware that the starring season began so long before the partridge season. It is obvious that the best weapon for such sport must be a rifle with a March-hare trigger.—Fun.

THE PUZZLED CENSUS TAKER.

"Got any boys?" the marshal said
To a lady from over the Rhine;
And the lady shook her flaxen head,
And civilly answered "Nine!"

"Got any girls?" the marshal said
To the lady from over the Rhine;
And again the lady shook her head,
And civilly answered "Nine!"

"Husband, of course?" the marshal said
To the lady from over the Rhine;
And the lady shook her flaxen head,
And civilly answered "Nine!"

"The d—l you have!" the marshal said
To the lady from over the Rhine;
And again she shook her flaxen head,
And civilly answered "Nine!"

"Now, what do you mean by shaking your head,
And always answering 'Nine?' "

"Ich kenne nicht English," civilly said
The lady from over the Rhine.

"Nein," pronounced nine, is the German for no.
J. G. S.

GEMS.

WHY is love like a fire? Because it burns brightest when everything is dark.

If a man cannot find ease within himself, it is to little purpose to seek it anywhere else.

In trouble we often come off better than we expect, and always better than we deserve.

A MAN never forgets an insult to his pride or purse; nor a woman to her beauty or love.

It is easy to look down on others; to look down on ourselves is the difficulty.

MEN want restraining as well as propelling power. The good ship is provided with anchors as well as sails.

Good is stronger than evil. A single really good man in an ill place, is like a little yeast in a gallon of dough; it can leaven the mass.

The vain man idolizes his own person, and here he is wrong; but he cannot bear his own company, and here he is right.

GRIEF knits two hearts in closer bonds than happiness ever can; as common sufferings are far stronger links than common joys.

A WOMAN with more heart than brain, more soul than intellect, more emotion than imagination, with an agreeable share of health and beauty, is the "rose without the thorn."

MISCELLANEOUS.

A NUGGET of gold was recently found in New Zealand, weighing 50 ounces.

THE six New Zealand chiefs, who have been left destitute, are now taking proceedings against their importer.

HERNAN, the puglist, who was injured by the late railway accident at Egham, has compromised his claim against the company for 800*l*.

THE Queen made a present of a handsome tea service to Miss Ransom, the daughter of Mr. Ransom, of Houghton Court Paddocks, on her recent marriage.

WHEN a man dies, the first thing we talk about is his wealth, the next thing his failings, and the last thing his virtues.

AN owner of a small freehold of forty-two acres in Middlesex has just procured an indefeasible title for £29 11*s*. 9*d*., through the Land Registry and Transfer Act, making the expense of registration less than 1*s*. 6*d*. per cent. on the value of the property (£4,000.)

Facts were recently asked for in favour of the Lord Chancellor's excellent measure, and the demand was not met. The above has fallen under our observation, and we therefore give it, and it speaks volumes of praise in favour of the cheapness and the simplicity of the measure.

A CRICKET-MATCH, extending over three days, between Surrey and Sussex, has terminated in favour of Surrey. The latter made 419 in one innings, the Sussex men 365 in both innings.

THE Countess de Polignac, age 77, was killed on Friday, at the Chapel in the Rue de Sévres, during a mass, by the falling on her head of a ladder which was used in the scaffolding in the church.

MR. T. P. COOKE, the well-known actor in nautical parts, left a fortune of £25,000, out of which £2,000 is bequeathed to the Royal Dramatic College, the interest to form an annual prize for the best drama on a nautical or national subject.

HONOUR DESERVED.—We understand that the Queen has been pleased to confer the dignity of a Baronet of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland upon Sir Charles Lyell, the eminent geologist, by the title of Sir Charles Lyell, Baronet of Kinnordy, in the county of Forfar.

BROTHER IGNATIUS, the Church of England monk, has been preaching in London, in a church, much to the annoyance, as it is said, of the Bishop of London. He is preaching against "Milliners' bills, Rotten Row, and the coldness of the High Church party."

A SOLDIER of Pistoja, searching for bird's nests in the ruins of a former convent, has found a silver goblet, most richly carved with figures. Connoisseurs who have examined the goblet recognised it to be a work of the celebrated Benvenuto Cellini.

DURING the last few days a small insect has made its appearance in the wheat in the neighbourhood of Taunton, the ears in some cases being quite full of them. The disease is said to be very extensive, and causes great anxiety amongst the agriculturists.

IT is said that among other forms of atoning for the murder of Mr. Richardson, in Japan, a handsome mausoleum, with a suitable inscription, has been proposed by Prince Satsuma, to be erected on the spot where the outrage took place.

LORD BROUGHAM has invited the House of Lords to dinner at the Cooking Depot in the New Cut. He has been there himself, and vouches for the quality of beef, peas, and potatoes for fourpence, and "a basin of soup, better than that which their lordships ever had at their own tables," for a penny.

THE sad story of the Great Eastern steamship shows that £1,000,000 has been spent, and nothing remains for the shareholders, original or preferential, or for the bond-holders; for the £25,000 realised at public sale for the ship will be hardly sufficient to pay the preference creditors and the law expenses.

THERE is a boy now living at Tresilian, near Truro, named Edward Weeks, who, although only twelve years of age, stands five feet six inches, is very bony, measures forty-three inches round the waist, and is of the astounding weight of 189 pounds, or about double that of an ordinary youth of the same age.

THOUSANDS of acres are annually planted to flowers in France and Italy, for making perfume alone. A single grower in Southern France sells annually 60,000 pounds of rose flowers, 30,000 pounds each of jasmine and tuberose, 40,000 pounds of violet blossoms, besides thousands of pounds of mint, thyme, rosemary, &c., and he is but one of hundreds engaged in this branch of horticulture.

ORIGIN OF BOOTS AND SHOES.—Boots are said to have been invented by the CARRIANS. They were at first made of leather, afterwards of brass and iron, and were proof against both cut and thrust. It was from this that Homer called the Greeks brazen-footed. Formerly, in France, a great foot was much esteemed, and the length of the shoe in the fourteenth century was a mark of distinction. The shoes of a prince were two feet and a half long; those of a baron two feet; those of a knight eighteen inches long.

THE stupidity of destroying small birds, it appears, has not been sufficiently shown, the circulation of intellect, through the medium of the cheap press, notwithstanding; for we find that, without the slightest fear of the devastation by insects of crops or of themselves, the overersers of Carrion-in-the-Fylde, Lancashire, pay a halfpenny for four eggs of the sparrow, the spink, the yellow yewrin, or the "yellow ammer," and bullfinch, also a halfpenny each for the heads of the old birds, and a farthing each for the heads of the young birds. The sum of 3*l*. has been paid since the 25th of March last for such eggs and birds in that township alone. We hope such rich people will not be missed by the searching eye of the income tax collector.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JANE.—In No. 59 you will find a good recipe for removing freckles.

JESSONA.—The handwriting is lady-like; the colour of the hair pale auburn.

NELLY S.—There is only one thing for you to do, and that is to return the last letter, unopened, and without any comment whatever.

LOTTI.—No person who is an "ordained minister" can be properly termed a layman; a layman being one whose functions are wholly secular.

T. B.—Silver and plated wares should be washed with a sponge and warm soap-suds every day after using, and wiped dry with a clean soft towel. (For recipe to promote the growth of the hair, see reply to "Carla's Brother.")

ROSEBUD is sad because she is still single. She is 5 ft. 5 in. in height, has dark, wavy hair, is good-looking, and eighteen years of age. "Rosebud" regrettably adds that she would not regard with disfavour the suit of "C. A."

CURIOSO.—The ordinary rate of speed of a man walking is 4 feet per second; of a good horse, in harness, 12; of a race-horse, 43; of a hare, 58; of the wind, 83; of sound, 1,038; of a 24-pound cannon-ball, 1,800.

R. S.—The readiest means of distinguishing artificial stones from precious ones is to touch them with the tongue. The real stone, being the best conductor of heat, will feel cold, and the glass much less so.

G. N.—Yes; but the invention of gunpowder is claimed for the German monk Schwarz, only because he is supposed not to have learned it from any other person. It was known in China in the year 85 A.D.

J. J.—It is equally correct to say "If so-and-so is rich, he is not respected," and "If Jane be studious she will learn." The verbs *is* and *are* both in the present tense, and each having the conjunction *if* before it, is in the subjunctive mood.

BIUSTOLIKER.—We know of nothing more really effective in whitening the nails than a mixture composed of two drachms of diluted sulphuric acid, one drachm of tincture of myrrh, and spring water four ounces. Mix, and after well washing the fingers, dip them into the mixture.

A HARVESTER.—We really cannot say whether the "laws of this country give to the poor peasant as perfect a right to the gleanings of fields as they give a farmer a right to his crop." Blackstone, however, treats of this custom as being in law of dubious validity.

B. P.—No, "brandy-paper," by which we suppose you mean paper dipped in brandy, is not the best covering to place over your preserves; because the spirit soon evaporates, and the watery particles produce mouldiness. Use paper covered with a glaze made with white of eggs.

YOLA.—You can sue for a decree of divorce, and, having obtained it, you will, of course, be at liberty to marry again. You must not, however, marry within three months, that is, until the decree has been made absolute; otherwise the marriage will be illegal and void.

ALICE and CHARLOTTE would like to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with two gentlemen. "Alice" is eighteen, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, has fair hair and complexion; "Charlotte" is twenty, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, and also rather fair. *Curtis de visite* exchanged.

E. A. M.—We do not approve of marriage between cousins, though we cannot say that such unions are reprehensible, they being legal. They are, however, certainly injudicious in a physical point of view, as all intermarriages between blood relations are.

J. O. Y. C. E.—As we have stated more than once, there is no special rule of etiquette on the point. If a gentleman offer his left arm to a lady, it is frequently inferred that there "is something in it." But it may or may not be meant to convey an intimation of his affection.

ELEANOR.—We very shrewdly suspect that your affianced cares a great deal more for your money than he does for yourself, or he would never evince such anxiety on the subject of your annuity; and we advise you to be very sure that he loves you before you marry him, and also get your money settled on yourself.

B. E.—The name *Alma* signifies in Latin, "gentle." Its introduction as a christian name only dates from the Crimean war, in which the first battle, which it was intended to commemorate, was so called. We must add, however, that the Russian name *Alma* is doubtless derived from the Arabic words *al-ma*, signifying "on the water."

L. L.—We doubt whether there is much, if any, virtue in the old-fashioned practice of rubbing the eyelid with a gold ring to remove a "stye," and cannot supply you with a recipe for the purpose. The eye is so delicate an organ, that we advise you not to tamper with yours, but consult an oculist.

MORELAND, who is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, with black hair, and considered passably good-looking, desires a matrimonial introduction to a young lady of domesticated habits, who possesses a good temper, is not over nineteen years of age, and would not object to a two years' corespondence.

A. and C., who term themselves two flowers who bloom unseen and in perpetual retirement, request us to notify the

fact to all and sundry bachelors who wish to be woe. We comply with their request; but "A." and "C." must be rather more explicit if they do ire to escape the fate which they seem to anticipate, of "blooming and dying unnoticed."

GUILLAUME DE BOURBON.—The lines entitled "The Hypocrite" we regret that we cannot insert, there being too obviously some individual reference in them, and a personal animus in the mind of the writer. This is to be regretted, for "Guillaume de Bourbon" will evidently some day be able to write poetry—if he discards personality.

ELEANOR.—Black hair is generally associated with a bluish habit of body, or muscular and nervous temperament, dark and yellowish skin, lively black eyes, and a bold air. All other things being equal, we do not think that persons possessing such characteristics are shorter-lived than "fair" persons.

ANTHONY WOOD.—It is probable that the violin was not known in this country before the time of Charles I., and that it was introduced from France. Charles II. kept a band of twenty-four violins, in imitation of the French king; and in the reign of the merry monarch the instrument first came into general use in England. Your handwriting is very fair.

JERVIS L.—If you cannot produce to the Civil Service Examiners a certificate of your birth, you must prove your age by a "statutory declaration." This declaration must specify precisely the date and place of birth, and should, if possible, be made by one of your parents. The entry in the Bible must be produced at the time of making the declaration.

H. J.—The lines evince more facility in rhyming than depth of poetic sentiment; but we nevertheless insert them with pleasure, because they are pleasing, piquant, and apropos:—

I AND COUSIN PAUL.

There does not live in any place,
On this terrestrial ball,

Two friends that are so near alike
As I and Cousin Paul.

Our forms are mated to a T,
We're handsome both and tall;
And few can boast more wit and brains
Than I and Cousin Paul.

Both have long and curly hair,
That down our shoulders fall;
And then we have moustaches, too,
Both I and Cousin Paul.

Our eyes are black as Nubian dye,
Our hands and feet are small;
And then such airs as few can boast,
Save I and Cousin Paul.

Among the ladies we are beaux,
And love to 'tend the ball;
None 'trip the light fantastic toe'
Like I and Cousin Paul.

In short, there never did exist,
Since father Adam's fall,
Two finer, smarter gentlemen
Than I and Cousin Paul.

Fair readers, never think we fear
A matrimonial "aqua";
For two are better far than one,
Say I and Cousin Paul.

Now if you wish to change your name,
This leap year you may try;
Who knows but you may win the heart
Of Cousin Paul or I?

CARLA'S BROTHER.—The following pomade will accelerate the growth of hair and whiskers, and preserve it when grown.—Best marrow, soaked in several waters and strained, half a pound; tincture of cantharides (that is, one drachm of powdered cantharides soaked for a week in an ounce of proof spirit), one ounce; oil of bergamot, twelve drops. (You can, of course, use any other perfume.)

LENA S.—Mathematics being not only an exact, but a purely mental science, is not an essential acquirement for a lady; whose education, if complete in the ordinary feminine acquisitions and accomplishments, may certainly be termed good without that particular knowledge. Your handwriting does not possess the ordinary fine strokes characteristic of ladies' calligraphy, but, being symmetrical, it is good.

A. C.—We cannot supply you with a recipe for an "ever-lasting perfume." The most enduring perfume that we know of is that contained in a vase which was taken from an Egyptian catacomb, and shown at Altwick Castle. At the present day the odour is still powerful, although probably more than 3,000 years old. That would be just the thing for you; but we don't possess the secret of its composition.

REGINALD is very anxious to marry soon, and in order therefore to be woe to correspond with any young lady, from twenty-five to thirty years of age, pious, domesticated, good-looking, a brunette, with dark hair, and possessing some means. He is thirty-nine years of age, well connected, of literary and refined tastes, with a nice business yielding £200 to £400 per annum; and hopes "Lizzie" (No. 45) may respond to him.

S. N.—The term gipsy is a corruption of the word Egyptian, that being the name given to that curious race of people because it was formerly believed that they came originally from Egypt. It is now, however, no longer disputed that they came from India at the time of the great Mohammedan invasion of Timour Beg, and that have belonged to one of the lowest Indian castes, which still resembles them in their appearance and habits.

EMERALD ISLE.—If you cannot procure from any bookseller in Liverpool the "Useful Grammar" to which we referred, in answer to "Veve," in No. 60, you should write to the publishers, Houlston and Wright, 65, Paternoster Row. The price of the grammar is 3d. Your handwriting is scarcely good enough to pass the Civil Service Examiners; but with a little care and practice it would become so; your orthography also, we observe, is somewhat defective.

ROSE, who is seventeen, of a good family, well educated, with dark hair, black, laughing eyes, fair complexion, very

regular features, and good expression, an orphan with no fortune, and entirely dependant on a "cross old maiden aunt," would be delighted to leave her state of thimble and be the companion of a tall, dark man, who would make a loving husband. We are sure that some doughty knight qualified as aforesaid, will step forward to the rescue of poor "Rose"—and lead her to the hymeneal altar.

D. H. B.—You should have told us into what department of the Excise you wish to enter, as the qualifications for each vary. Clerks in the solicitor's office are required to pass an examination in handwriting, orthography, arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions), English composition and history, geography and Latin. For other clerks, examining officers, gaugers, outdoor officers, messengers, &c. the requirements only extend to the first six or four subjects. Your handwriting is characterised by too many flourishes.

N. DESPERANDON.—You may compete for admission into the Civil Service, provided you are within the limits of age prescribed in the special department you may select if you are free from any physical defect or disease which would be likely to interfere with the proper discharge of your duties, if your character is good, and if you are found to possess the requisite knowledge and ability for the due discharge of official duties. We shall have pleasure in supplying you with any other necessary information.

N. J. C.—We think your excessive nervousness is in part due to your over indulgence in smoking; that, in fact, you are suffering from the effects of the poison called nicotine. All smokers, by inhaling the fumes of tobacco, introduce into their system a certain minute quantity of this poisonous essence; a few drops of which, we may add, will, when volatilised, throw out a vapour so oppressive that breathing becomes almost impossible in a room where the smallest portion of it has been spilled; and if taken internally, a few drops cause death.

W. R. S. S.—We certainly feel in some difficulty as to what advice to give you. Why must you run away from home? Cannot you make your parents understand that a young man of twenty ought not to be allowed to grow up any longer ignorant of the world, and so get their permission to leave home for awhile, in order to obtain something of the knowledge which will be necessary to you in life? Try this course; and afterwards, if you think it necessary to write to us again, supply particulars respecting your circumstances, and we may be better able to advise you.

LEONORA.—The manufacture of soap is of very ancient origin, but we really cannot tell who invented it. We know, however, that the word comes from the Greek *sapo*, and that the people who now are reputed to use it very little as said by Pliny to have been its discoverers, namely the Gauls. It was, we also know, made by the Hebrews, and has been found at Pompeii; and according to Simeoni, soapmakers were held formerly in such honour that one was included in the retinue of Charlemagne. Probably, however, his office was a sinecure—and the great conqueror may himself have been one of the "great unwashed."

ISOLA.—When saliva is tinged with blood there is assuredly some mischief at work in the system. It may be, however, in the stomach (and as you say you are very subject to sick headache, that is probably your case), when the danger is of a minor degree; but it may be that the evil lies in the lungs, where the danger would be most imminent. If the blood which makes its appearance is bright in colour and frothy, the mischief is in the lungs, and you must place yourself at once under medical care. Indeed, we advise you to do so on either supposition. Unless you are very debilitated, we should say that at this time of the year a trip across the Irish Channel would not be absolutely dangerous. (See also reply to "Eleanor.")

COMMUNICATIONS RESERVED.—"Nicholson" would be happy to correspond with "Annie" (No. 62), with a view to matrimony. Is rather tall, dark complexioned, and in tolerably good circumstances. "Blue Bell" is willing to correspond matrimonially with "Harold," should he wish it.—Comte Adrien Robert des Fargy de W. is immensely taken with "Polly's" pen-portrait, and throws himself at her feet; that is to say, the count entreats to hear further from her—"No Name," who is twenty years of age, with dark hair and eyes, good-looking, of medium height, domesticated, and of amiable disposition, intimates that she would like to exchange *cartes*, &c., with "C. A."—"H. H. N." offers a loving heart to "C. A."—"C. A." is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, dark complexion, amiable disposition, quite domesticated, and would do all she could to make "C. A." happy—"M. E. D." would have no objection to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with "C. A." Is 5 ft. 5 in. in height, age twenty, dark eyes and hair, lively, amiable disposition, and thoroughly domesticated—"Zillah," a brunette, tall, with black eyes and hair, lively in disposition, nineteen years of age, good tempered, fond of music (plays very nicely), but has no fortune, would like to correspond matrimonially with "Harold"—"Cedar Leaf," in response to "Harold," (with whom she would like to correspond), states that she is seventeen, rather tall, slight figure, dark hair and eyes, very lively, and pretty; has had a good education, but has no fortune—"Isabel Jane" has no objection to correspond matrimonially with "C. A." Is twenty years of age, has dark complexion, with brown hair and eyes, is of medium height, thoroughly domesticated, and competent to make a home happy—"Solitary Walter" acknowledges with *empressment* the kind reply of "S. S." whom he is ready and willing to endow forthwith with himself and all the worldly wealth which he possesses.

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